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ROSCOE'S
SOUTH WALES:

WITH THE
SCENERY OF THE RIVER WYE.





THE GREAT WALL,
INCLUDING THE RIVER SYE



BY

THOMAS AGNEW & SONS



5447

WANDERINGS AND EXCURSIONS

IN

S O U T H W A L E S,

WITH

The Scenery of the River Wye.

BY

THOMAS ROSCOE, ESQ.

WITH FIFTY ENGRAVINGS,

FROM

DRAWINGS BY HARDING, FIELDING, COX, CRESWICK, AND CATTERMOLLE,

AND AN ACCURATE MAP.

LONDON:

HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1854. 2d

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| Plinlimmon. | Devil's Bridge. Hafod. Nanteos Park. Llanavan. Strata Florida. Plinlimmon. Llangurig. | |
| | RHAIADYR. Abbey Cwm Hir. | |
| Radnor Forest. | RADNOR. Presteign. Llanwrthwl. Newbridge. | Kington. |
| Rhiw Graid. | | |
| | BUILTH. Aberedw. Erwood. | Talgarth. |
| Macalough. | | |

| <i>Left.</i> | <i>Route.</i> | <i>Right.</i> |
|---------------------|---|---------------|
| Clifford Castle. | HAY. Clifford. HEREFORD. <i>Cathedral.</i> <i>Aconbury Hill.</i> Wilton. | |
| Bishop's Wood. | Ross. Goodrich. Coldwell Rocks. | |
| | MONMOUTH. | Ragland. |
| | Ragland. Redbrook. | Troy Park. |
| Bigswear. | Llandogo. Brockweir. Tintern. | |
| | | Windcliff. |
| Piercefield. | CHEPSTOW. Aust Cliffs. Bristol Channel. | |
| | TENBY. Llanstephan. Lamphey. Manorbeer. | Lawrenny. |
| Stackpole Court. | PEMBROKE. Pater. St. Govan's Head. Stackpole Court. Carew Castle. | |
| | MILFORD. | |

| <i>Left.</i> | <i>Route.</i> | <i>Right.</i> |
|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| St. David's. | HAVERFORDWEST. | |
| | Picton Castle. | |
| | Fishguard. | The Sea. |
| The Sea. | Newport. | |
| | CARDIGAN. | |
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| | Kidwelly. | |
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| | SWANSEA. | Gowerland. |
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| | Neath. | |
| | Margam. | Swansea Bay. |
| Old Castle. | Bridgend. | |
| | Cowbridge. | |
| Llantrissant. | CARDIFF. | The Severn. |
| | LLANDAFF. | Newport. |
| | Caerphilly. | |
| | Pont-y-Prydd. | |
| | Pont Neath Vaughan. | Merthyr. |
| | Ystradfelte. | |
| | BRECON. | |
| | Crickhowel. | Talgarth. |
| | Llangattock. | |
| | Llantony. | |

WANDERINGS IN SOUTH WALES.

CHAPTER I.

ABERYSTWITH.

When that sweet April showers with downward shoot
The draught of March have pierced unto the root,
And bathed every vein with liquid power,
Whose virtue rare engendereth the flower ;
When Zephyrus also with his fragrant breath
Inspired hath in every grove and heath
The tender shoots of green, and the young sun
Hath in the Ram one half his journey run,
And small birds in the trees make melody,
And sleep and dream all night with open eye ;
So nature stirs all energies and ages
That folks are bent to go on pilgrimages,
And palmers for to wander through strange strands,
To sing the holy mass in sundry lands.

CHAUCER MODERNIZED.

SOUTH WALES, the land of superstitions, and the battle-field of civil strifes,—the country in which the rival crowns of the Principality contended for undivided sway,—the historic soil over which the Saxon, Roman, and Norman forces poured the full tide of their bloody course,—may not, perhaps, be so distinctly marked as its neighbour of the North by the prouder features of Nature ; but it is, nevertheless, more rich

in those peculiarities which verify the condition of the human mind in its stages of ignorance, and in its progressive advances towards civilization, and more rife in those strange incidents which render history most interesting to the chronicler, the philosopher, and the general reader.

I do not mean by the admission which the preceding remark may seem to sanction, to relinquish any tenable ground of comparison with the sublime realities of the northern part of the Principality; but if the gentle reader, who may have journeyed with me in my former wanderings, will follow me through these records of my spring and summer pilgrimage, I think I shall furnish to him such abundant illustrations to attest the grandeur that reigns on the mountains, and the grace that dwells in the valleys of the southern counties of Wales, as shall place his judgment in that situation of delightful indecision, in which the painter has drawn the celebrated Garrick betwixt the rival Muses; or, feeling his curiosity stimulated by the time he has read thus far, shall induce him abruptly to say, with the impatient Pandarus,

“Come, draw the curtain, and let's see your picture.”

The Welsh, among their national apothegms, have this descriptive and poetical triad:—“There are three indispensable requisites of genius: an eye to see nature, a heart to love nature, and boldness and perseverance to go along with nature.” Let the reader, then, if he possess an atom of this quality, in whatever distant county of “merry England” he may chance to have his domicile, put on his boot of leagues, and in





a trice we shall appear like two way-worn pilgrims, threading our way through the mazy streets of that gay and busy watering-place, Aberystwith, and after tarrying there awhile, commence together our travels amidst the majestic and beautiful scenes of this ancient land of the Silures and Dimetæ.

Aberystwith is delightfully situated on the north bank of the Rheidol, in the centre of Cardigan Bay, commanding a sea-view of great extent, and of that sublime beauty inseparable from a marine prospect bounded only by the horizon. The hills of the North Welsh coast are distinctly seen on a clear day stretching far out in the distance, the chain ending with the promontory of Llyn and Bardsey Island; Snowdon, Cader Idris, and the forked summits of the Merionethshire hills, are sometimes discerned; and on the south, the coast may be traced as far as St. David's Head. The whole of this ocean amphitheatre was formerly dry land, and the greater portion remained so until the sixth century, when Gwyddno Garan Hir was the reigning prince of the district. It was named Cantrev y Gwaelod, the Lowland hundred, and is mentioned by the Welsh bards and historians (indeed, the terms are synonymous) as being fertile and beautiful in the highest degree, and containing sixteen fortified towns, and a large population. The fine champaign country extended from Harlech to St. David's Head, and was wholly destroyed by an inundation of the sea, the waters of St. George's Channel having burst over their wonted boundaries, and covered its entire extent. Thus was formed the present Bay of Cardigan, whose deep blue waves now roll over many a ruined city and once-

mighty fortress lying in irretrievable desolation beneath them. The cause of this calamity is attributed by the old historians of Wales to the intoxication of Seithynin, the son of Saidde, who had the care of the sluices, and neglected to drop them on the coming in of the tide.* The words of the "old Bard" may be read as a literal description of the melancholy event just related—

"Time has wrought changes in this ancient earth !
 The sea now overlays the land where smiled
 The early Spring ;—where Spring grew on to Autumn,
 And perfumed buds ripened to glossy fruit.
 Man flourished there, anticipating man !
 And laughing childhood with its thousand pranks ;
 Cities were there, thronged, walled, and turreted ;
 But in one fatal night those babbling tongues
 Were hushed. The dancing Seasons come no more
 With flowers and fruit—cities and castles,
 Domestic halls and altars, warriors and peaceful men,
 And household loves, lie grov'ling there amidst
 The dank sea-weeds. Old Ocean's dreary wail
 Sings the sad story,—that a land is lost."

The Castle Hill forms a favourite promenade for the visitors at Aberystwith, from its commanding and picturesque situation, sweeping the whole coast, and looking down upon the contiguous mouths of the Ystwith and the Rheidol on one side, and the beautiful vale which descends with the latter river, on the other ; but each year so much reduces its seaward cliffs, that they, and their hoary ruin-crest, must eventually be swept away. The base of this small promontory is com-

* Mr. Lewis Morris, the antiquary, found on the coast of Merioneth, a stone in the sands, about a hundred yards below water-mark, with this inscription in Roman letters : "Hic jacet Calixtus Monedo Regi." Here lies the boatman to King Gwyddno.

pletely caverned by the breakers that dash, and foam, and thunder in its hollow sides, making most dread, but "eloquent music," and flinging their light spray over the sea-beat cliffs.

Aberystwith Castle now consists but of a few fragments, among which remain parts of two small towers, and one more lofty, with a gateway. It appears to have been an important post in times of warfare, and is stated to have been originally built by Gilbert de Strongbow, son of Richard de Clare, about the year 1107. Henry I. having given Strongbow permission to win for himself the inheritance of Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, the invader succeeded in his unjust enterprise, and erected two castles, one at Aberystwith, and another in Pembrokeshire, for the protection of his ill-gotten territory. In 1111, Prince Gruffydd ap Rhys came over from Ireland, where he had resided from his childhood, and, being suspected of a desire for sovereignty, he became embroiled with the invaders, and encamped between Llanbadarn and Aberystwith to besiege the castle. In his attempt he was defeated by a *ruse de guerre* of the lieutenant of the earl of Clare, governor of that fortress. The lieutenant, who had been expecting all day the attack of the enemy, sent out some of his skirmishers in the evening towards the bridge which crosses the river, to entice the troops of Gruffydd into an ambuscade which he had prepared. The manœuvre succeeded. "The Welshmen," says their own historian, Powell, "approached and skirmished with them, and suddenlie issued forth one horseman, and would have passed the bridge, but his horse was wounded with a pike, and began to faile,

and, as he returned to the footemen, he fell off his horse, and the Welshmen pursued him over the bridge. When the Englishmen saw that, they fled towards the castll, and the Welshmen followed to the hill top, and suddenlie the ambush of horsemen, that laid under the hill, thrust betwixt them that had passed over the bridge, and they that fled turned back with more strength, and so the Welshmen were encompassed on either side, and the bridge so kept that no rescue could come to them, where they were slain for the most part, being all naked men. Then the rest seeing the great number of the men armed, which they looked not for, turned backe, and departed the countrie." In another attack, however, he took and razed the fort, slew the Normans and Saxons who were settled in Cardiganshire, and restored to the Welsh the lands and habitations of which they had been despoiled. The castle was reinstated by Cadwallader, son of Gruffydd ap Conan, and destroyed by his brother, Owen Gwyneth. It continued to experience all the changeful fortune of predatory warfare, alternately fortified and overthrown. Doubtless it was no very difficult matter to demolish the fortifications then used; but, in course of time, a more powerful master possessed it, and even his provisions for its defence were of little avail against the desperate and enthusiastic struggles of expiring liberty. Edward I. rebuilt this castle in the year 1277, and returned to England in triumph; but the rulers of the marches exercised too great severities for peace long to continue between the prince of Wales and the king of England. The year before the subjection of the Welsh was scaled, they numbered among their many brief but

brilliant successes, the capture of this newly-erected English fortress. Many more of the invader's strongholds were at the same time taken by the Welsh, and all the partisans of foreign domination were severely harassed throughout the country. In the year 1404, Aberystwith Castle was taken by Owen Glyndwr. In the time of Charles I., the Parliament permitted it to be used as a mint; some of the pieces of money coined there are frequent in antiquarians' collections, and were of silver from the neighbouring mines. During all the Welsh wars, this fortress was considered of great importance, and, during the civil wars, was regarded as a place of considerable strength. The last and most destructive siege it endured was in the time of the Protectorship, when it was bombarded by the Parliamentary troops, while Mr. Bushel held it for the Royalists.* The besiegers occupied a high mount, called Pen-dinas, on the opposite side of the Rheidol, where Prince Rhys had formerly made an intrenchment; and since the overthrow the castle then received, a heap of ruins only has been left to tell of its ancient strength and glory.

About a mile from Aberystwith, on the banks of the

* Mr. Bushel established a mint at this place, under license from the king, for coining his silver to defray the current expenses of his various works. This gentleman was once the servant of Sir Francis Bacon. He became afterwards the proprietor of the silver-mines in this neighbourhood; and such were his immense profits, that he made King Charles a present of a regiment of horse, and clothed his whole army. Besides these, he furnished to that monarch a loan of £40,000 towards his necessities, which was afterwards converted into a gift; and when the unfortunate king was sore pressed, he raised a regiment among his miners at his own charge.

Rheidol, are the remains of an old fortified mansion, which the vulgar call Owen Glyndwr's Palace, but which was supposed to have been erected by the monks of Llanbadarn Fawr, the site of whose monastery was contiguous. Of the date of this building nothing now is certainly known. It is believed to have been the residence of the early princes of Wales; for it is mentioned by the bard Eneon ap Gwgan, who flourished in 1244, in his ode on Llewelyn the Great :—

“ His spear flashes in the hand accustomed to warlike deeds ;
It kills, and puts his enemies to flight, by the palace of the Rheidol.”

Of this monastery nothing remains save the church, which is of great antiquity, and most beautifully situated in the lovely vale of the Rheidol. It is believed by some, that subterranean passages led from this monastery to the fortified mansion above mentioned, Plas Crug, and likewise to Aberystwith Castle; but I need hardly remark, that none are known to exist at present. Llanbadarn—the great church of St. Badarn—is supposed to be the Mauritanea where St. Padarn or Paternus founded a monastery and an episcopal see in the sixth century. St. Padarn seems to have been a most ill-used person, for it is recorded that he not only performed the functions of his office without reward, but alleviated the distresses of the poor as far as his ability permitted; and yet these ungrateful people killed their kind-hearted archbishop, and, as a punishment for their crime, the bishopric was sunk in that of St. David, though in the time of Giraldus there was still an abbey under the jurisdiction of a layman. “Vilify not thy parish priest,” is a Welsh proverb arising out of this act of cruelty, and

consequent degradation of this see. "There never was a good person of them since," is another provincial saying, and shows how deeply the inhabitants of this place had fallen in the estimation of their countrymen. The monuments in Llanbadarn Church must not be forgotten, amongst which is one, consisting of a long flat stone in the chancel, to the memory of Lewis Morris, the Welsh antiquary. The records of this excellent man's life display the struggles of genius and perseverance amidst difficulties and poverty, in their onward path to fame and respectability, with which he was ultimately rewarded. He was, at the same time, in relation to Welsh literature, critic and historian, poet and musician. In this latter capacity, he taught Mr. Parry, the blind bard, to strike his harp to the simple notes of his native land, and to awaken, with such exquisite effect, those thrilling melodies which slept amongst the chords of his favourite instrument. He died at the age of sixty-three, and left his valuable collection of manuscripts to the Welsh Charity School, in Gray's-Inn Lane, London. Llanbadarn was a city in 987, and was destroyed by the Danes in the reign of Meredydd ap Owen. It now consists chiefly of low, mean cottages, with a few of a better description, and one or two good houses; but at a distance is a very pretty-looking village, in one of the loveliest valleys imaginable. The Rheidol winds through it in a succession of graceful bends, beneath rich hanging woods, craggy mountains, and fair pastures; with here and there a white cottage peering from among the trees, and sending up its curling blue smoke, as if to tempt the mimic pencil of the artist.

The Rheidol is crossed near Llanbadarn by a small

bridge, and at Aberystwith by one of five arches, overlooking the harbour, which is small and inconvenient, and the bar at its mouth prevents vessels of any size entering, except at spring tides. Many lives are lost, and others constantly endangered, for want of a comparatively trifling expenditure in rendering this harbour a safe and commodious one : and when we consider the immense advantages the town and neighbourhood would derive from an improvement so much needed, and so readily to be accomplished, it does seem a marvellous thing, in these enterprising times, that the evil should be tolerated so long.

The town of Aberystwith certainly has not much to engage the attention of the tourist ; irregular streets, running in a maze-like confusion, compose its greater part ; and these, with sorrow be it said, are thickly adorned with alehouse-signs. The Marine Terrace, however, is an exceedingly agreeable promenade, forming a semicircle on the margin of the sea, and consisting chiefly of comfortable lodging-houses for the accommodation of visitors. Bounded on the north end by the high rock called Craiglais, or Constitution Hill, and on the south by the castle ruins, it commands in front an uninterrupted view of the ocean, which, at Aberystwith, shows its grandest characteristics. A stiff gale blew for some days after my arrival, and, as I sat in my quiet study, on the terrace, I could see the grand waves come rolling in, each like a huge living mountain, bending its proud head over the cavernous depth below, before taking its last landward leap, in scattered, feathery foam ; another and another close behind, in endless succession, seemed as if the ocean's boundaries





W. B. Woodcut.

J. B. B. B.

THE GREAT FLOOD OF THE GREAT FLOOD.

had become too narrow for the world of waters they contain, and I almost expected Neptune's roaring sea-lions to overleap their allotted bourn, and give a re-enactment of the Cantrev y Gwaelod tragedy.

In the midst of a dark storm one evening, a sloop, seen through the drifting rain and haze, like a spectre of the sea, appeared about three miles out, making for the harbour, with her sails set, and running before the wind at a gallant rate through a tremendous sea, which seemed alternately to engulf her in its dark abysses, and fling her aloft like a toy on the waves' white crest. A more tempestuous evening has seldom been known here, and the most intense anxiety pervaded all classes lest the vessel should be lost, of which there seemed but too great probability. Hundreds of persons, both visitors and inhabitants of Aberystwith, were seen hastening to the Harbour: and not a few ladies braved the storm, though scarcely able to proceed, from the excessive violence of the wind. Every spot commanding a view of the sloop was crowded by eager and anxious spectators; some trembling for the fate of husbands, brothers, or friends, who they believed were on board, —and screaming with agony, as the huge waves half-hid the objects of their solicitude from view. But she came along swiftly and unswervingly,—

“She walked the waters like a thing of life,
And seemed to dare the elements to strife.”

As she neared the bar, the anxiety of the assembled crowd became doubly intense, and yet more painful when the shrill screams of children were heard from the vessel, through all the deep roaring of the winds

and waves. Another minute of breathless fear, and the perilous bar was cleared—all lives were safe! The captain and owner of the sloop had been her pilot, and the screams heard were from two of his own children, who had been lashed to the mast during the gale. I have since been informed that he is esteemed the most skilful sailor in the country; and the gallant bearing of his beautiful little vessel well proves the truth of such report.

Since writing the preceding, I have heard with great pleasure that some of the leading country gentlemen and residents in Aberystwith have most liberally commenced a subscription for the purpose of improving the harbour, and thus lessening the danger to vessels entering it.

A fantastic-looking building, half Gothic castle, half Italian villa, stands between the church and the sea; it was built by the late Sir Uvedale Price, but is now used as a lodging-house. Ghost-stories are becoming rare even in Cambria's mystic land; but this castle-house, as it is termed, is said to be patronized by a spiritual resident in the form of a "White Lady," who is, by some imaginative persons, supposed to occupy one of its octagon towers. I have very diligently perambulated about the lady's haunts, at all hours of the day, and when the dim twilight gave a supernatural colouring even to common-place personages; but my seaside musings have never been spectrally discomposed, and so I cannot add the precious testimony of eyewitness-ship to this "White Lady" romance.

The church of Aberystwith is a modern structure,

and possesses no beauty, but good accommodation for its numerous congregation. Adjoining the burial-ground is a pleasant garden, the sweet perfumes from which often greeted me while roaming near the gaily-hued inclosure. Gardens are generally rare and meagre near the seashore; but this seems guarded by some kind fairy, who sheds the softest tints and sweetest fragrance on her favourites.

Wild flowers, "the philanthropists of their race," are abundant on the hills around; delicate harebells, waving on their light stems, proud foxgloves, glowing purple heather, and golden gorse, shine out in starry beauty from bank and moorland:—

"And are they not the stars of earth! Doth not
Our memory of their bright and varied forms
Wind back to childhood's days of guileless sport,
When these familiar friends of later years
A beauty and a mystery remained!
And were they not to infant eyes more dear
E'en than their starry kindred! For one glance
Of wondering love we lifted to the vault
Of the o'er-orbed sky, have we not bent
Full many a glance of pleased affection down
To the green field, starred over with its hosts
Of daisies, countless as the blades of grass
'Midst which they seemed to look and laugh at us!'"*

The beach generally presents an amusing appearance to a stranger, and although I have been a performer in the scene, it afforded me equal entertainment. There

* From "The Romance of Nature; or, the Flower-Seasons illustrated," by Louisa Anne Twamley, now Mrs. Meredith. The poems in this highly interesting and elegant work are of great beauty, and are distinguished for original thought and bold and expressive imagery, as well as for a peculiarly musical flow of language.

are occasionally found here valuable pebbles of agate, jasper, &c., and many small crystals; accordingly, every one who visits Aberystwith expects to carry away a world of wealth "of his or her own picking up;" and this picking-up fancy becomes a serious business. On propitious days there appears on the shining beach an army of treasure-seekers, each with a small basket to hold the jewels; and there they are, rank and file, from morn till dewy eve, with bending backs and downcast eyes! while hands, feet, parasols, camp-stools, and oyster-shells, are enlisted into the service. Let any Aberystwith visitor gainsay it who will, this is *the* favourite amusement for all ages, sizes, sexes, and classes,—from the peer to the postilion who brought him the last stage, and from the delicate invalid lady to the little barefooted Welsh wench up to her knees in the surf. It becomes an inveterate habit; one would think some sea-sprite threw a spell over us so soon as our footsteps press the enchanted strand, for no one escapes the infliction—and lumbago, rheumatism, and other consequent ills too often follow the avaricious exploit. For *these* visitors, however, there is a speedy and luxurious cure in the excellent and commodious warm baths, of which there are several on the terrace, and in other parts of the town; also a chalybeate spring at a short distance.

Nor is Aberystwith without the usual public amusements of a fashionable watering-place, for those whose health or inclination leads them to seek the gay as well as the picturesque: here are balls, races, theatricals, &c.; and to all who are fortunate in finding kind friends and pleasant acquaintance among the residents





or visitors, this may well be selected as a summer retreat for successive years. The bathing is excellent; and the number of pleasure-boats always employed, proves how much the sea-excursions in the neighbourhood are enjoyed. The excellent fishing in the Rheidol and the Ystwith, tempting to disciples of quaint pleasant old Isaac Walton, calls forth many a merry party of anglers to the delicious vales of these winding rivers. It appears singular that the Ystwith should give its name to the town—*Aber-Ystwith*, the mouth of the Ystwith,—since the Rheidol flows *through* it, and only joins the Ystwith at some distance, when they both fall into the sea together. The town in this situation was called Aber-Rheidol about the time of our First Henry, but when the name was changed is not correctly known; it was also called Llanbadarn Gaerog, or the fortified Llanbadarn, from its nearly adjoining that once great city.

Some delightful excursions may be made from Aberystwith, among the grand and romantic scenery of Cardigan's mountains and glens. First in beauty as in popularity, is the oft-praised, but indescribable spot, where the Devil's Bridge frowns over its sublime and perilous chasm. The road from Aberystwith to the bridge is replete with beauty of varied character. On quitting the town, we ascend steep hills, wearisome alike to man and horse, till, from the summit, is gained a view of the lovely vale of the Rheidol, with its fantastic winding stream, flowing in silvery, snake-like curves throughout, and "the everlasting hills" on either side lifting their hoary summits to the sky; while in the inland distance "hills above hills, and alps

on alps arise," with Plinlimmon's many-beaconed head, turbaned with clouds high above them all, like the monarch of the mountain realm that lies in proud subjection around his mighty throne.

Gradually the valley narrows as we recede from the sea, until, on abruptly turning round a singular conical rock, the strange and wondrously beautiful scene, which has so long alike baffled the descriptive pen and the mimic pencil, bursts in all its grandeur on the delighted eye. The glen of the Rheidol, narrowed to a ravine, down which a roaring cataract pours its inexhaustible waters, lies before the gazer—and the terrific chasm of the Mynach yawns beneath his feet at a dizzy depth below. It is a scene to be feasted on, trembled at, and dreamed of, sleeping and waking; but not to be preconceived, painted, or described. The bridge consists of two arches, one immediately above the other. The lower arch is of great antiquity, and supposed to have been built by the monks of Ystrad Flur, or Strata Florida Abbey; but antiquarians are not agreed on this point, as tradition fixes the erection of the bridge in 1087, and the Abbey of Strata Florida was not founded till 1164. Giraldus Cambrensis mentions having passed over it in 1188, when preaching the crusades with Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury. The wild and stupendous scenery surrounding this spot greatly enhances the terrific grandeur of the ravine, and no doubt had its share in the origin of the vulgar denomination it has received; all appearances both in art and nature, which were beyond the comprehension of the simple and superstitious people of past dark ages, were without hesitation attributed to "his majesty of ebon wing;"

and many are the sublime and extraordinary scenes popularly resigned to his patronage.

Grand as is the view from the bridge itself, when the half-dizzy gazer looks down into the dread abyss, yet he is then unable to form any adequate idea of the vastness, the gloomy magnificence of the scene, as seen from below. Passing over the bridge from the inn, and descending a steep and rather dangerous path to the right hand, the wonderful chasm over which the arches are thrown is viewed to the greatest advantage. It appears a narrow and perpendicular fissure in a solid rock, one hundred and fourteen feet in height; the singular old arch spans it about twenty feet below the new one, and a double gloom is thus given to the naturally dark abyss, at the bottom of which the impetuous Mynach foams and boils along, roaring as if in wrath at the mighty rocks which gird in its chafed and rapid waters. It is a fearful scene! The black and riven precipitous rock, which reared its form of darkness before me, seemed to shut out all of calm and beauty which the world contained, and to spread its own region of wild desolation around. If a traveller have only time to descend one path at the Devil's Bridge, let him choose this. In many situations he may see cascades, but the extraordinary chasm at this place is one of Nature's inexplicable freaks, and a single specimen is all she vouchsafes us. Although the depth of the fissure, at the least computation, is one hundred and fourteen feet, and may be probably more, the width of the aperture, in some places, does not exceed *fifteen inches*; it is, therefore, evidently impossible that the river could be the original cause of the chasm, as sup-

posed by some tourists; though its waters having found an outlet, they have no doubt continued to widen and deepen their confined channel.

After regaining the bridge, another hazardous path is descended on the opposite side, through a wood, and round an abrupt point of rock, to view the four falls of the Mynach, when it escapes from its imprisoning ravine, and rushes down to meet the Rheidol, which is seen rolling in a magnificent cascade between two grand swelling hills in an opposite direction.

The third path, down which the guide conducts visitors, is formed by the side of the falls, and commands very beautiful views of them individually; the first is twenty-four feet, the second fifty-six, the third eighteen, and the fourth, or grand cataract, one hundred and ten. In this admeasurement no allowance is made for the inclined direction of the river in many parts; the total height, from the bridge to the level of the stream when it joins the Rheidol, is about five hundred feet. At the jut of the lowest fall in the rock is a cave, said to have been inhabited by robbers, two brothers and a sister, called Plant Mat, or Plant Fat, who used to steal and sell the cattle of their neighbours, and whose retreat was not discovered for many years. The entrance being just sufficient to make darkness visible, and admitting but one at a time, they were able to defend it against hundreds. At length, however, they were taken, after having committed a murder, for which they were tried, condemned, and executed. The sides of the dingles are richly wooded, and the interlacing foliage of the trees sometimes almost embowers the cataract, while the stupendous hills,

that rise high on either side, are decked with bright clusters of mountain-blossoms; heath and wild thyme shed a purple glow over the hoary crags, and the different yellow and white flowers gem the verdant carpet with "treasures of silver and gold;" for the spray, incessantly flung up by the foaming waters, falls in a gentle shower around, "making the ground one emerald." As I sat contemplating the magnificent scene before me, where the last great plunge throws the water one hundred and ten feet down the rugged chasm, I felt how accurately descriptive are Byron's lines on the Falls of Terni; they echo the spirit-voices that we seem to hear around us in such a scene.

"The roar of waters!—from the headlong height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters!—rapid as the light;
The flashing mass foams, shaking the abyss;
The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss
And boil in endless torture!"

After the fatigues of these ascents and descents from and to the "Acherontic stream," the comforts of the Hafod Arms Inn are right welcome; and a wanderer may spend a pleasant and profitable evening in "chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies" arising out of the scenes with which his senses have been fed during the day.

CHAPTER II.

HAFOD—STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY—YSTRAD MEIRIG.

Here balmy air, and springs as ether clear,
Fresh downs and limpid rills, and daisied meads,
Delight the eye, reanimate the heart,
And on the florid cheek emboos the rose
Mid sweetest dimples and unfeigned smiles.
Here shepherd swains, attentive to their charge,
Distent o'er hillocks green, or mountains huge,
Mantled with purple heath.

VOYAGE OF LIFE, by the Rev. David Lloyd.

THE usual custom being to visit Hafod from the Devil's Bridge, and I, like a systematic and orderly wanderer, having followed the example of my predecessors in the vagrant line, my readers, in like manner, will be good enough to follow me while I retrace my steps to that *former* "paradise of dainty devices."

The road to Hafod lies through a wildly mountainous tract of country, at first overlooking the deep dingle where the foaming Mynach tears its angry way; and then over the brow of a hill commanding an extensive and richly-varied prospect. At the summit of this hill, an arch is thrown across the road, and being seen for a considerable distance on either side, it forms a picturesque object in the landscape; though to a stranger it holds out a deceitful promise of some more interesting

and ancient fabric than the mere ornamental creation of a neighbouring landowner. From this arch the road descends somewhat steeply, and a turn to the right leads to a lodge, at which the grounds of Hafod are entered. Here the view becomes extremely beautiful; richly-wooded hills rise around, leaving a valley of lawns and groves, through which the Ystwith takes its ever-varying course, now plunging down a rocky ravine in a sheet of white and glittering foam—now flowing darkly along, shadowed by the graceful branches of the mountain-ash, and the delicate birken spray, while the sturdy king of the woods, the massive-foliaged oak, groups more heavily and richly with the glossy Spanish chestnut and the darksome fir. A lovely road along this lawny vale at one graceful sweep brings the visitor in front of the mansion, the exterior of which is the only part that the present owner suffers the eyes of curious tourists to be edified by examining; and this, though sufficiently elegant for the residence of both the affluent and tasteful, certainly possesses none of the magical attributes which certain writers are ambitious to invest it with. The original mansion of Hafod was nearly destroyed by fire, in 1807, with many of its valuable manuscripts, books, and pictures. A new mansion, however, arose under the genius of its late tasteful proprietor, equal in extent to the former one, which, after his death, with his estate, passed into the hands of trustees.

The description of Hafod, so laboriously essayed by some Mr. Cumberland, I find quoted in almost every guide-book; of course it is considered the *ne plus ultra* of the sublime and beautiful; and as my readers will

look in vain for so dainty a paragraph in *my* homely composition, I cannot refuse them the advantage of perusing this choice specimen:—"Wales and its borders, both North and South, abound at intervals with fine things: Piercefield has grounds of great magnificence, and wonderfully picturesque beauty; Downton Castle has a delicious woody vale, most tastefully managed; Llangollen is brilliant; the banks of the Conway savagely grand; Barmouth romantically rural; the great Pistyll Rhayader horribly wild; Rhayader Wennol gay, and gloriously irregular; but at Hafod I find the effects of all in one circle," &c. &c.

The grounds of Hafod are highly favoured by nature, in variety of form; and Art has lent her improving hand so gracefully and *naturally*, that we forget she has so much to claim in the beauty of the place: but its late proprietor, and we might almost say creator, well knew how to blend the wild and the cultivated in harmonious union. Colonel Johnes, the late lamented and excellent owner of this immense estate, planted nearly *three millions* of trees upon bare heathery hills, where now rich hanging woods form so striking a contrast to the adjacent scenery. Under his fostering and unwearied care, the spot he selected to work his wizard-like change upon, became such, as, in some measure, to warrant even the extravagant praise bestowed on it; but now, the beauty is fast waning in the neglect and general absence of its present proprietor; the pleasant and well-kept walks have become quagmires, and where a garden once shed its many perfumes on the air, inviting the approach of wandering guests, now a wilderness of tall grass and rank dandelions fills the

space. The stranger-loving bird, too, of which travellers have spoken, with its triple yellow crest, that used to delight in making the acquaintance of all pilgrims to Hafod, and to entertain them with its imitative notes, is dead. The beautiful cascades, the rocks, the woods, and the gentle wild-flowers, still wear their wonted looks of grandeur and loveliness; but where the hand of man should give its aid in maintaining the improvements of art, all is gone to decay.

In Cwm Ystwith, a valley separated from Hafod by a mountain-ridge, are some valuable lead-mines, belonging to the earl of Lisburne; but the impracticable appearance of the entrance to their subterranean labyrinths, compelled me to disappoint the curiosity I generally gratify by a "voyage to the interior." The heaps of dark grey ore lying all around; the damp, dirty, attire of the miners; and the herbless desolation of the scene, may well be described as forming a startling contrast to the rich, verdant, and beautiful grounds so near.

The inducements for inland excursions from Aberystwith are not very numerous; but among the places renowned in olden times, to which I had long resolved on bending my steps, while sojourning in the vicinity, was the Abbey of Strata Florida, little of which now remains.

Passing out of Aberystwith to the south, I traversed a richly-wooded district, interspersed with smiling corn-fields, and whitewashed cottages peeping contentedly from the bosky dells or broomy braes around. The hedges were decked with clusters of spring flowers, greeting me kindly with their sweet odour; and fox-gloves, mallows, and the delicate dancing harebells,

enamelling the banks beneath the canopy of green leaves, made the road seem a pleasant garden-walk.

"All things rejoiced beneath the sun ; the weeds,
The meadows, and the cornfields, and the reeds,
The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
And the firm foliage of the larger trees."

A few miles from Aberystwith, I gained a fine view of Nanteos Park, in a little valley inclosed by rising hills, with a seaward prospect of considerable extent. Continuing my way through woods, and pretty English-looking scenery for a while, I descended to the vale of the Ystwith, a scene of great beauty. The river winding in Wyc-like curves and horseshoe bends, occupies the middle of the flat, and on either side, the banks, gradually rising, are embroidered, as it were, with fields, woods, gardens, and cottages with their light blue peat-smoke rising gracefully "above the green elms;" while mountains, piled one on another, complete the picture. Beyond, where the valley narrows, is Crosswood, the seat of the earl of Lisburne, surrounded with plantations, some of which skirt the Ystwith, and overhang its rocky and deep bed, which is here clasped by an elegant wooden bridge, rustic-looking, yet perfectly commodious,—qualities not often united. Wending still onwards, I crossed the Ystwith, at the bridge of Llanavan, a village (if such it can be called), consisting of a few wretched cabins; and then up a high hill I pursued my weary way. Soon after gaining comparatively level ground, in passing through a stream which traversed the road to a mill, I heard the sounds of falling water apparently at a short distance. Quitting the road, and descending a rugged pathway on the right of

it, I soon came in view of a great slanting slate rock, down which the mill-stream falls in one grand unbroken cascade, into a dark deep pool, whence it gurgles quietly along, under a turfy bank, to a second mill at a short distance, built below the level of the water, which, after turning the wheel, is flung off in a beautiful cascade, and falling into a wooded ravine, goes plunging down the rocks to join the main stream in the glen; for this busy working streamlet is but a branch of the larger body of water, which is guiltless of application to useful purposes. From the turf-bank already mentioned, I could see indistinctly, that a vast glen lay far below, and could hear the sound of many waters, echoed by the precipitous rocks around. Having summoned one of the barefooted urchins from a neighbouring cabin to guide me, I accompanied him through the pathless underwood and tangled herbage which skirted the sides of the ravine, and at length found myself in the bed of the river, standing on slippery fragments of rock, round which the waters foamed and boiled in loud roaring rapids. Before, beside, all around me, as it seemed, mountain-torrents rushed down the immense wall of rock, which here closes the glen in a kind of narrow amphitheatre, and is richly adorned, though not wholly clothed with wood. Five distinct streams were in view at once, all leaping from a dizzy height above me, and rolling down in infinite variety of forms; some falling by places over the bare shelves of rock, spread out in a broad clear sheet of water; others, half-hidden by the verdant dewy foliage of the trees, sprang but partially into sight, scattering afar their feathery foam, like streams of light amid the

gloom of this darksome glen. The roar of the falling water, in its rocky and confined basin, reverberated by the high cliffs that wall it on three sides, is deafening; and after remaining in this damp and perilous position, until both eyes and ears besought a respite in quieter scenes, I climbed once more into upper air, and found a large assembly of "Natives" collected to see the strange being who had so unceremoniously introduced himself to a scene unsought, and nearly unknown, in the neighbourhood it adorns. The miller popped his white face out at his mill-door, with as suspicious a glance as if he feared my design was to elope with the objects of my admiration instant, and even the auld wives suspended the swift evolutions of their knitting-pins, in wonder at my invasion; so little sought is this beautiful spot, though only the same distance from Aberystwith as the Devil's Bridge, to which people flock by scores. Not that I mean to imply any *comparison* of the two scenes—they are essentially different in character; but surely, when one is so universally visited, *some* lovers of the grand and the beautiful in nature might add the other to their list of Cardigan-shire pilgrimages. When at the place, I could not distinctly understand the name given it by the bare-legged guide, but have since learned that the dell is called Pwll Caradoc, i. e. Caradoc's or Caractacus's Pool, a Welsh prince of that name having fallen over the precipice, and been killed. Tradition has two versions of the story; one says that the prince was hunting, and leaped into the terrific chasm accidentally, while in pursuit of the quarry; the other says that he "rushed over:" but, as I am unwilling to suspect the

prince of anything like *felo de se*, I gave credence to the former supposition.

This fall is not only unsought by visitors, but it is not even named by any guide-book or tour which I have yet seen ; and I have consulted many for the purpose of finding if its history or existence was known to the authors.

The water of this, and most other mountain-streams in the vicinity, is of a dark-brown colour, though as clear as crystal. Even the foam of a large body of it is yellow, instead of white. This singular appearance is caused by the turbaries through which the streams flow, and in which many of them rise. The Rheidol, Ystwith, Mynach, Teivy, all I have observed here, wear the russet-colour.

Proceeding onwards over many streams whose course crossed the road, having no other bridge than a tree and a rail for passengers, I passed the village of Pont Rhyvendigaid, *Anglicè*, the Blessed or Holy ford, so called by the good monks of the olden time ; a substantial bridge is now the commodious substitute for the ancient ford, and over it is passed the Teivy, in which river, as Fluellyn would say, "there be good salmons." Ystrad Fflur is an extensive valley of excellent meadow land, very retiredly situated, and chiefly remarkable now for the ruins of its once grand and richly-endowed monastery, called by the Welsh, Mynachlog Ystrad Fflur,—the abbey of the blooming or fertile plain, now strangely Latinized into Strata Florida. According to Dugdale, the edifice of which we now see the remains, was built by the abbot, in the year 1294 ; but the structure raised by Rhys ap Gruffydd stood about two miles

distant to the south-west, upon a plain near the river Fflur, where an old building, now used as a barn, is called Hên Monachlog,—the old abbey.

Camden says the abbey was a Cistercian house, founded by Rhys ap Gruffydd, and Meredith, his brother. Leland, Farmer, and Dugdale, mention it as an establishment of Cluniacs, founded by Rhys ap Tewdwr, in the time of William the Conqueror. "Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" Certain it is that the abbey was immensely rich, being valued at the Dissolution at upwards of one thousand two hundred pounds; and was the chief repository of whatever was learned or civilized in former turbulent times. Its hospitals and cells were established in every direction, and it divided with the Abbey of Conway the honourable charge of depositing and carrying on the records of the Principality.

To the monks of Strata Florida we are chiefly indebted for the accurate "History of Wales," from the year 1157, till the final defeat and death of the last Llewelyn, during which period these reverend fathers were the bearers of their prince's remonstrance, and interceded with the archbishops of York and Canterbury for their good offices in relieving him from the insults and oppressions of the Marchers.

The earliest and most authentic account we have of the kings of Britain, in the form of a regular history, is a MS. in the British, or Armorican language, called "*Brut y Brenhinoedd*," brought here from Bretagne in France, by Gualter, archdeacon of Oxford, about the year 1100. Geoffrey of Monmouth's History is a free translation of this, though some moderns have

doubted the authenticity, and even the existence, of the original, accusing Geoffrey of attempting to impose his own fables on the world as a genuine portion of British history. But however fabulous his book may appear to those unacquainted with the nature of the times on which it treats, there certainly is an ancient copy still extant, called "Brut y Brenhinoedd," preserved in the library of Mr. Davies, of Llanerch, Denbighshire.* This MS. includes the history of Wales to the year 700; from this period Caradoc of Llan-carven took it up, and faithfully continued it from the most authentic documents to the year 1157. Several copies of Caradoc were deposited in different archives, and, amongst others, in those of Ystrad Fflur. The monks of this house carefully recorded every memorable event subsequent to that period, till the fatal defeat of the last prince of British blood who was able to assert the independence of his country, A.D. 1282.

This abbey seems to have been a grand mausoleum for the royal and noble in Wales, many princes and renowned persons having been here interred; but to *me* its cemetery gained most interest from being the last resting-place of the celebrated Welsh poet Davydd ap Gwylim, many of whose compositions are replete with grace, fancy, and a most keen and satirical spirit. So far we have looked only at the past: the present appearance of this once mighty edifice serves as a humiliating lesson to human pride and power. The glory of ancient days has passed away;—the princely abbey has mouldered into dust, and been

* Evans.

destroyed piecemeal for the sake of its materials, with which many a squalid cabin in the neighbourhood has been created. In a slovenly and wilderness-like garden, adjoining the present churchyard, stands a circular gateway of extreme beauty; in three different "Guides" it is termed severally, Gothic, Saxon, and Norman.* The carving consists of six simple flutings, one within another, cut in such fine relief, that at a short distance it has the appearance of an arcade; over the centre of the arch is a carved stone, apparently representing a double crosier-head. In the wall adjoining this gateway, a pointed window still remains, nearly overgrown with ivy and a variety of small shrubs, which have taken root in the crumbling stone. A fine elder-bush, gay and fragrant with its large clusters of delicate flowers, occupies the inner space of the beautiful archway, silently telling of the transitory nature of all man's laborious work, compared with the everlasting, ever-renewed vigour and freshness of nature. Some remarkably large box-trees grow opposite the arch, and very close to it, rendering probable my surmise, that this was the garden-front of the abbey, where these ancient trees perhaps decorated the "pleasance" of the reverend brotherhood. At some fifty or sixty paces distant from this spot stands a fragment of masonry, like the corner part of some large building, about forty feet high, composed of the common slate rock of the country, strongly, though somewhat rudely, put together. And these scattered remains are all that time has left to tell us of this once magnificent abbey!

* Malkin, Nicholson, Evans.

As I gazed on its ruined fragments, Fancy, with her airy spells, began to array the fallen edifice in its former might and glory:—

“I could not dream!—

And yet a visionary band arose,
 'Mid solemn music's thrilling swell and close,
 A silent, shadowy train; the taper's gleam
 Fitfully o'er monastic forms was shed,
 O'er mitred abbot, and the lengthened line
 Of dark-cowled monks that bent around the shrine
 Still, calm, and voiceless as the slumb'ring dead.
 They passed away—that strange and solemn train:
 The pealing music murmured through the trees,
 Breathing its faint farewell upon the breeze,
 And to its distant home returned again.
 They passed away—the sunbeams brightly shone,
 And o'er me smiled the cloudless, azure sky,
 Where late the fretted roof's proud canopy
 Rose o'er the torch-lit crowd. I was alone;—
 Where late the golden censers high had hung
 Their fragrant clouds around the imaged throne,
 The wall-flower shed its perfume, as it clung
 And waved in wild luxuriance o'er the stone,
 Chafed by the storms of years; an emblematic bloom,
 An halo-coronal of light o'er grandeur's tomb.
 Around me all was calm and still; the wind,
 Even that 'chartered brawler,' seemed to feel
 A strange, unwonted awe, and strove to steal
 With gentler voice amid the hills that shined
 A scene so tranquil.”

So important a place was this in olden times, that Llewelyn ap Jorwerth, in 1237, invited the lords and barons of Wales to Ystrad Fflur, and required from them the oaths of fidelity and allegiance to his son David. Those who now visit the spot, in its dismantled and ruinous desolation, will scarcely believe that the whole country round could furnish accommodation for

such a company, or that this could be the theatre of ceremonies such as are solemnized with us under the awful roof of Westminster. The situation of this abbey, in the darkest recess of a mountainous semicircle, amidst numerous coppices of wood, with the land cultivated up the steep acclivities, well illustrates the proverbial good taste of the monks, who generally prevailed with their founder to place them in the pleasantest and most fertile land of a district, under the protection of mountains 'not far distant, and, above all things, on the banks of a fresh and rapid stream, abounding in *fast-day* delicacies.

The present church, a small neat building, erected out of the ruins of its grand predecessor, stands in a burying-ground which is still spacious, though occupying but a small portion of the original cemetery. In Leland's time it was shaded by thirty-nine venerable yews; but the dying remains of only a few of these patriarch-trees add a melancholy beauty to the scene. Under one of them, tradition says that Davydd ap Gwylim lies interred. When the Druidical or Bardic hierarchy began to decline in Britain, it was succeeded by the Hermitical and Monastical institutions, which also became the nurseries of learning, and the grand repositories of music, poetry, British bards, and records, until the reign of Henry VIII., who abolished the monasteries. All the abbeys appear to have retained bards and minstrels of their own; Davydd ap Gwylim is said to have been the bard of Ystrad Fflur, and Guttyn Owen the historian and herald-bard to that abbey. Sooth to say, Davydd seems, by the style and character of his numerous poems, to have been a most

unfit person to hold office in any *holy* establishment, unless the monks somewhat resembled in moral discipline the jolly "Friar of orders Gray" of the old song; for the greater part of his effusions are celebrations of his mistress's beauty, the fair Morvudd, who being wedded against her will to a humpbacked old churl, Davydd found means to carry her off twice from her husband, and thereby incurred much disgrace. He also, in a witty dialogue poem, supposed to be spoken by himself and a friar, severely ridicules much that appertained to the sacred calling; which offences, added to the levity, if not licentiousness, of his life, make the circumstance of his being an abbey-bard paradoxical, if not doubtful.* The poetry of Davydd

* This poem, I fear, illustrates too truly the bard's creaturely propensities. It begins with a confession, as was meet, to the holy man, though it ends with some irreverent and bitter repartees.

———— "Dread sir, to idle rhyme
And amorous sighs I give my time;
In a dark brow and beauteous face
My earthly paradise I place."

Davydd was in high estimation amongst his countrymen, and, in 1360, he was elected to the bardic chair of Glamorgan. The style and subjects of his writings obtained for him the name of the Welsh Ovid. Like the Roman bard, he was not a little careful of the adornments of his person; for he was deemed, as the chroniclers say, "the man of fashion of the times," though of his piebald wardrobe no particulars have been preserved. Davydd's fine person made him a great favourite with the fair sex, and he had many love affairs on his hands at the same time. In one of his wayward humours he made an appointment with each of his mistresses to meet him, at the same hour, under the well-known trysting-tree, where he had often vowed eternal fidelity to them all separately. In order to enjoy the result of this whimsical congress, he hid himself amongst the branches, where he could hear and see everything. The love-sick damsels came one by

ap Gwilim is considered the purest standard of the Welsh language; and from his poems the modern literary dialect has been chiefly formed.

Returning to Pont Rhyvendigaid, I halted at the small hostelry, where a rampant red lion swings and creeks its invitation to man and beast. Ushered into the inn's "best parlour," I amused myself by observing the multifarious decorations of this state apartment. Around the walls hung various Scripture subjects, most woefully caricatured by the artist. The mantel-piece was decorated with wax and crockery-ware effigies of the same class, and the grate's costume was truly original. Carefully pinned to a curtain hung a very knowing lace cap, with borders of that extraordinary width and abundance seen only among the Welsh belles, and most beautifully "got up," as the ladies say. On a corner table, too, lay a hat, which, by its gloss, newness, and clever shape, evidently intended to invite the cap to church the following Sunday; and the entrance of a tight, blooming, dark-eyed, and sprightly-looking Welsh girl with my intended repast, soon enabled my calculating curiosity to supply a face worthy of the becoming national costume. I *like* the dress of the bonny Welsh lassies, and trust they will

one, and great was the amazement at their meeting, when each looked upon the other as an intruder upon her privacy. At length the trick was discovered, and an ebullition of rage followed, in which they all agreed upon the death of their faithless lover on the first opportunity. The bard, who was witness to the whole, contrived, by some extemporaneous verses, which he pronounced from his hiding-place, to raise a spirit of jealousy amongst his fair admirers; their rage was now turned upon each other, and, in the confusion that followed, he contrived to make a safe retreat.

be long in yielding to the insipid innovations of modern millinery. They would resign their piquant black hats with no little reluctance, did they know how flat and unbecoming the flippant silk bonnets, displayed by some of them, look in comparison. The hat is not worn by the peasantry alone, for I have seen not a few spruce beavers accompanied by rich silk dresses, fashionable kerchiefs, and silk stockings. While sojourning at Aberystwith, I greatly enjoyed seeing the farmers' comely wives and pretty daughters riding to market with their sacks of corn over the saddle, for here the women sell small quantities of grain at market, and with the produce purchase the various articles required for domestic use, which are stowed in the corn-sack on their return; and often have my eyes detected the form of a new teapot, or the circumference of a frying-pan, in these bags-of-all-work.

In returning from Pont Rhyvendigaid, I repassed the village of Ystrad Meirig, celebrated for its excellent grammar-school, which attained to such celebrity as to be called the Welsh College. The founder of this establishment was Edward Richards, a native of this parish. His father was a tailor, and kept the village public house. In his youth he was indolent and wayward, till the sudden death of his brother, from a fall over a precipice in Maen Arthur Woods, roused his mind to serious reflection, and determined him upon that severe course of study which raised his fame to the highest point of scholarship. He continued the school which had been commenced by his predecessor, and which was carried on in the church, as may be frequently observed in the Principality; and having

brought it into great eminence, he confirmed its existence after his decease by the endowment of his property. Mr. Richards was a poet of the first order, and his pastorals, written after the models of Theocritus and Virgil, are said to be "the most polished compositions in the Welsh tongue." Many most eminent men, both of past and present times, have received the greater portion of their education at this school; amongst whom was that great scholar and bard, Evan Evans, although, from its appearance now, I fear its fame is on the decline.

The situation of Ystrad Meirig, though not possessed of that pre-eminent grandeur and beauty which distinguish so many spots in Cardiganshire, is one of much interest, and the immediate neighbourhood is partially wooded, and abounds with fine craggy mountains and romantic cwms. The castle of Ystrad Meirig was formerly an important out-post to Aberystwith, built, like that larger fortress, by the Norman adventurer Gilbert de Strongbow, and afforded timely succour to the usurping party, in the day of danger, when Prince Gruffydd ap Rhys was on the point of retrieving the rights of the natives. Florence of Worcester mentions Gruffydd ap Rhys to have died by the deceitful practice of his wife. In 1137, on the accession of Owain Gwyneth to the supremacy of Wales, his first exploit was to overthrow the enemy's stronghold at Ystrad Meirig. In 1150, the sons of Gruffydd ap Rhys, having lost many of their brave men at the successful siege of Llanrhysted, marched to this place, where they re-fortified and manned the castle. It was of considerable importance in all the subsequent wars, till in the year 1208

it was destroyed by its owner, that it might not fall into the hands of Llewelyn ap Jorwerth. After this period it does not appear to be mentioned in history.

The southern part of Cardiganshire is chiefly composed of wide-spreading mountains, vast, grand, and dreary, with a very scanty population. The banks of the rivers, as in every instance, afford the finest scenery, and the most fertile land; the Teivy will well reward the wanderer for the time and toil of a lengthened pilgrimage. "This water," says old Giraldus, "farre passeth al the ryvers of Wales in plentie of salmons, and al the ryvers in Inghland and Wales for stoare of beavers, or otters. The salmon hath his name, *a saltu*, of leaping, for his propertie is to swimme against the streame; and, when he findeth any stoppe, he taketh his taile in his mouth, and so casting his bodie into a circle, loseth himself sodainly again, and as a twigge that is bowed both endes together, and sodainly resolved springeth withal an heichte, and getteth over it." The beaver was formerly abundant in the Teivy, though centuries have now passed since its extermination. The former existence of this animal in this neighbourhood is amply proved by the laws of Howel Ddu, the authenticity of which is unquestioned; the price of a beaver's skin is there set down, and in different parts of Wales are ponds and lakes which have borne the name of beavers' pools from time immemorial; such as Llyn-yr-Afanc, or Lake of Beavers, in the vicinity of Llanidloes. It is evident that beavers existed here in the time of Giraldus, whose account of their manner of constructing their cabins is too accurate to have been compiled from hearsay or tra-

dition; and "he is no contemptible authority, though a politic conformity to the tastes of his readers might, perhaps, induce him, in some instances, rather to consider what they would admire, than his own accuracy. Had the assertion related to anything miraculous, or anything involving the interests of the *Church* or the *Crusade*, we might reasonably suspect him of an undue inclination; but, in the present case, he had some reputation to support as a topographer, and no interest to warp him as a churchman." Old Burton, in his notice of this county, gives the following account of this curious animal:—"In the river Teivy beavers were formerly found; a creature living both by land and water, having the two fore feet like a dog, wherewith he runs on land, and the two hinder like a goose, with which he swims; his broad tail served for a rudder: but now none are found."

The goats in the present day seem to have met the fate of the wolves and beavers of past eras, it being a most rare event to see one of these animals in a wild state, even among the mountain retreats of Cambria; a fate I very much regret, both for their beauty, nationality, and usefulness to the peasantry. But the poor goats offend the owners of newly springing plantations, by their *penchant* for nice young sprouts and leaves of trees, as a little variety in their diet of whin and heather; and their native haunts are now occupied by the far less picturesque but more harmless sheep, which so far emulate the athletic accomplishments of their predecessors, that they leap from crag to crag, with their dirty, torn, neglected fleeces dangling in strange and ludicrous disorder about them, with as much agility as

their bearded relatives. I have frequently seen the mountain sheep trailing after them their ragged coats in a train of a yard or two in length, and heartily abused the careless indolence of their owners, while I pitied the miserable plight of the poor bramble-shorn animals.

On a mountain two miles north-east of Strata Florida, are five lakes, of which Llyn Teivy is the principal. It is said to be unfathomable, and is encompassed by a high and perpendicular ridge, which at once feeds and confines its everlasting waters. It has been by some travellers supposed to be a crater, but the stones around bear no marks of volcanic action. Leland, in his quaint way, says—"Of al the pools, none stondeth in so rokky and stony soile as Tyve doth, that hath withyn hym many stonis. The ground al about Tyve, and a great mile towards Stratfler, is horrible, with the sight of bare stonis, as cregeryri mountaines be. Llin Tyve is fed fro hyer places with a little broket, and issueth out again by a smaulle gut. Ther is in it veri good troutes and elys, and no other fisch."*

This group of lakes forms one of the chief natural curiosities of this dreary district. On leaving Llyn Teivy, a few minutes' walk attains the summit of the mountain, and a view of four more lakes, each within a few yards of the other. The largest cannot be much less in circumference than Llyn Teivy, and is of a different form, being narrow in the middle. The smallest is circular, occupying the highest ground, and in appearance much like a crater; its circumference is

* The Teivy is the small stream which issues from the lake, afterwards swelling to an important river.

about three quarters of a mile. These lakes are all said to be fathomless, and their extraordinary effect is much heightened by the strong degree of agitation to which they are subjected by their exposure ;—the scene, though totally desolate, is very grand.

This is the highest ground in Cardiganshire, and the prospect most extensive ; but the cluster of mountains, on the most elevated of which are the lakes, reaches so far, as entirely to obscure the vales between the near and distant hills : all is wild and rugged, with Plinlimmon and Cader Idris rearing their lofty heads in the north. The prospect on the south-west extends to the high grounds about Cardigan, which appear distinctly ; and beyond those to the sea, which is less clearly defined.

Between Pont Rhyvendigaid and Castle Inon, is Llyn Vathey Cringlas, about a mile in circumference, of a beautiful oblong form. This lake is said to occupy the site of the ancient city of Tregaron,* which is popularly believed to have been “swallowed up” in some convulsion of nature. That such catastrophes have occurred, we have ample proofs ; but according to Welsh tradition, almost every pool has a ruined city beneath its waters. Llyn Savaddan, or Brecknock Mere, in the county of Brecon, is by some antiquaries imagined to cover the ancient city of Loventium ; and the circumstance of the old high-roads all tending to that spot

* The present village of Tregaron is about three miles distant from the lake, and contains but little that is interesting, except its old church, and some ancient inscriptions in the churchyard, especially one to Mailyr, the son of Rhywallan ab Gwyn, who fell in the battle of Caruo, in 1010.

seems to render probable the supposition : but, granting this to be the case, it appears more than likely that the tradition of an ingulfed city has become associated with other places in which no ground for the belief ever existed, in the same manner that we find some of our old English legends related, in precisely the same terms, in celebration of places wide apart.

The chain of hills in this neighbourhood runs without a single break from Llanbeder to Bishop's Castle, in Shropshire, a space of about sixty miles. It might be traversed on horseback almost without the interruption of a single gate or fence, and probably without seeing a human being.

On the high lands in this neighbourhood are numerous tumuli and cist-vaens. In the parish of Cellan is a large circular moated tumulus, on the summit of which is an immense stone, or rather rock, eleven yards in diameter, called *Llêch Cynon*. On the mountain to the north of the river *Frwd* are two cist-vaens called "*beddau*," or graves, and on the mountain on the south are two more, one of which is called *Bedd y Vorwyn*, or the Virgin's Grave. Sir S. Meyrick had these opened ; their form was oblong, consisting of four stones, and in the centre, a little tumulus of earth and stones. After clearing this away, there appeared a stratum of gravel, then a layer of sand, and under that burnt ashes of bones and wood lying on a bed of clay, which had been placed upon the rock. The depth of each was about three feet, and from two to four feet long. A very great number of the *carnau* or *carneddau* may be seen on the mountains in this parish ; but two extremely large ones, upon a very high mountain near the road

leading from Llanvair to Llanycrwys, are most conspicuous. These, and another called Fair Carnau, consist of heaps of large stones, in all probability the graves of warlike chiefs who fell near the spot. Other great stones, placed on adjacent mountains, have most likely been erected in commemoration of a victory. Near the road leading to Llanycrwys are the remains of a Druidical structure: several of the huge stones formerly belonging to it lie scattered around. Two ancient intrenchments, one circular, the other oval, lie in the vicinity, with numerous *carneddau*. Few districts present more of interest for the research and reflection of the antiquary than the now dreary and almost untrodden wilds of South Cardigan; formerly—as the gigantic remains of other days fully attest—the scenes of priestly power, royal magnificence, and all the “pomp and circumstance” of dazzling, desolating war.

CHAPTER III.

WELSH COTTAGES—WEDDINGS—SUPERSTITIONS— MINES.

Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small,
He finds his little lot the lot of all;
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head,
To shame the meanness of his humble shed;
No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,
To make him loathe his vegetable meal.—GOLDSMITH.

If this were an age of black-art and gramoury, instead of enlightenment and steam, and the wandering traveller likely to be whisked from place to place by the powers of enchantment instead of the more straightforward aid of railroads and stage-coaches, we might well imagine the amazement of some economical, orderly English farmer, on being suddenly introduced to the scenes of wild, uncultivated mountain-land, which the rambler in Wales is ever familiar with. But not even the change in the general aspect of the country would astonish him so much as the squalid misery and dirt of the cottages, or rather cabins, of the peasantry. They may be placed on an equality with the worst specimens of Irish habitations, at least very many of them.

In the districts of Cardiganshire, the dark slate rock of the mountains furnishes a good material for the walls

of these hovels, and of such they are mostly built, with apertures of the smallest possible dimensions for windows, which may or may not be supplied with a pane or two of green glass; but if they are, they are permanently fastened up, an opening window not being found in a cot of this degree; and the accumulation of dirt renders them nearly useless in admitting light. The floor, either mud or rough slate pavement, is generally the abiding-place of as many pigs, ducks, and sheep-dogs as the owners possess, all lying at ease, or walking freely in and out;—pigs and children, be it understood, partaking the comfort of the hearth, and nestling in affectionate companionship among the heaps of unswept ashes that lie around the turf fire,—the smoke from which always declines going up the chimney, when there is one; for these things, deemed necessary with us, are here quite matters of taste, some cabins being decorated with low wattle appendage to the gable, while others have only a hole in that quarter, which serves to let in the wind and rain, without letting out the smoke, which invariably makes its exit by the door; and in passing through a “village” of these cottages, the vapour from opposite doors rises into an aerial archway, beneath which the uninitiated traveller coughs and grumbles along. The wattled chimneys I have mentioned, are sometimes truly ludicrous in their position; no doubt they are originally as erect as the rest of the building, but their general condition is such as to remind one of opera-dancers, striving to preserve their equilibrium in most extraordinary deviations from the perpendicular. Sometimes, fairly twisted round by the wind, they stick in the roof by one peg of the

basket-work, and look very like a *pirouette*; at others they may be seen lifted from their proper place, and seeming in the act of a *coupé*; and so happily are things managed, that opposite or next-door neighbours nod and *set* to each other with all the friendliness imaginable, seeming ready to *change sides* the first opportunity. Yet, amid all this filth, and, as *we* consider, misery, the female part of the cottagers are as spruce in their national costume on Sundays and holidays, and as proud of their assortment of crockery-ware, of which an unnecessary number of jugs forms an indispensable part, as if surrounded with all the more substantial comforts of life. To look at the habitations, one would marvel how a clean mob-cap, or a decent coat, could belong to people so apparently lost to all notion of comfort and neatness. Their cheerfulness and content under privations that would not be endured by an English labourer, while it surprises, almost provokes us, as seeming to place a formidable bar in the way of future improvement. Flummery, buttermilk, and coarse barley bread, form much of their food; I have often seen the labourers of respectable farmers dining out of a bowl of flummery (a sour jelly made from oat-husks), with such thankful content, as made the remembered fare of an English farm kitchen seem absolutely sumptuous by the contrast; and I have sometimes thought that a temporary residence among these cheerful, hard-feeding mountaineers might be a salutary lesson to some of the croaking consumers of beef, bacon, pudding, and ale, in England. Far be it for me to assert, that abstinence from the last-mentioned indulgence forms a general part of the South Cambrian

character; I would that I could say so with truth, but the ancestral beverage of *cwrw* is a thing anciently and well beloved.

Weddings, generally the scenes of much mirth and wassailing among the rustic population, are here accompanied by some singular customs, which, though not so universally practised as in former years, deserve mention, as they are far from becoming obsolete. The bidding, as it is termed, takes place about a week before the day of ceremony, the bans having been published as in England. The bidder, or official inviter of the guests, goes from house to house with his wand of peeled willow, garlanded with ribbons, and standing in the middle of the floor, repeats a long lesson with great formality, enumerating the various preparations, and requesting the attendance of the family he has called upon. The following is an old form of invitation, read by the bidder in Llanbadarn, some years since, literally translated:—"The intention of the bidder is this: with kindness and amity, with decency and liberality, for Einion Owain and Llio Elys, he invites you to come with your good-will on the plate; bring current money; a shilling, or two, or three, or four, or five; with cheese and butter. We invite the husband and wife, and children, and men-servants, from the greatest to the least. Come there early; you shall have victuals freely, and drink cheap, stools to sit on, and fish if we can catch them; but if not, hold us excusable, and they will attend on you when you call on them, in return."

Saturday is fixed as the day of marriage, and Friday is allotted to bring home the furniture of the woman,

generally an oak chest, a feather bed, clothes, and crockery. The man provides a bedstead, table, dresser, and chairs. The evening is employed in receiving presents of money, cheese, and butter at the man's house, from his friends, and at the woman's house from her friends; this is called *purse and girdle*, an ancient British custom. All the presents are set down on paper, and when demanded they are to be returned. On Saturday, the friends of the man come on horseback to his house, to the number of fifty or a hundred, eating and drinking at his cost, making their presents, and repaying those made at their weddings. Ten or twenty of the best mounted then accompany the bridegroom to the house of his intended, to demand her of her friends, who, with the lady, appear as uncomplying as possible, and much Welsh poetry is employed by way of argument, in some such fashion as this :—

“Open windows, open doors,
And with flowers strew the floors;
Heap the hearth with blazing wood,
Load the spit with festal food;
The *chrochon** on its hook be placed,
And tap a barrel of the best!
For this is Owain's wedding day;
Now bring the fair one forth, I pray.”

At length the father appears admitting and welcoming his guests; they alight, take refreshment, and proceed to church. The girl mounts behind her father, mother, or friend, upon the swiftest horse they can procure, and gallops off with the intended husband, and all the wedding guests riding after in full chase. “Over the hills

* The large three-legged iron pot used for cooking.

and far away " go these bride-hunters, till the girl or her steed grows weary, and she suffers herself to be quietly conducted to church and married. All the party then return to the married couple's house, eating at free cost, but finding their own liquor. The sale of the wedding presents of cheese and butter often produces from ten to twenty or thirty pounds, which, with the money also presented, is a seasonable help to the young housekeepers. Many of my Welsh friends tell me they have often joined the wedding troop, and that the chase is a most animated and amusing scene, the bride leading the cavalcade of merry equestrians in any direction, and the whole party scouring the country like mad folks.

We are apt to marvel at accounts of odd ceremonies and customs in other lands, without knowing half the peculiar habits and ancient rites still practised within the boundaries of our own country ; many of which, especially among the Welsh, may be traced to the highest antiquity.

The familiar superstitions of Wales are becoming gradually fainter and fainter ; but it is notorious that in this county they were more rife than in almost any other in Wales, and that not only amongst the uneducated portion of its inhabitants, but including those who, from their rank in society, might have been considered superior to the delusions of their age. John Lewis, Esq., a magistrate, residing near Aberystwith, writing, in the year 1656, to a clergyman, relates several stories of apparitions, and the *Canwyll Corph*, or corpse candles, with a minuteness and simplicity which show his entire belief in his narratives. The Rev. John Davis, a

minister, in Cardiganshire, has written down the order which seems to regulate this superstition:—"We call them," saith he, "corpse candles, not that we see anything besides the light, but yet it resembles a material candlelight, as much as eggs do eggs, only they sometimes appear and instantly disappear: for, if one comes near them, or on the way against them, unto him they vanish; but presently appear behind him, and hold on their course. If it be a little candle, pale and bluish, then follows the corpse of an abortive, or some infant. If a big one, then the corpse of some one come to age. If two, three, or more, great and little, be seen together, then so many and such corpse will follow together. If two candles come from divers places, and be seen to meet, the corpse will do the like. If any of these candles seem to turn out of the way or path that leads to the church, the following corpse will be found to turn in some place, for the avoiding some dirty lane, plash, &c."

The author of the *Mountain Decameron* gives some graphic descriptions of several other popular superstitions, which I shall transcribe. "The superstitious of Wales form no part of the popular *poetry* of our age; yet there exist many grandly imaginative. How few know anything about our *Cwn Annwn*,* that is, 'Dogs of the sky,' but which their office, as assigned, would warrant us to call the *Bloodhounds of Souls!* by earthly analogy. Sudden fires trail along the heavens at the moment of a dying person's body and soul taking leave, and that light is no other than that fire which each of

* *Annwn*—The *bottomless abyss*; *Hell*, in the ancient sense, as the "bourn" of all spirits.

that terrible pack always has following after like a chain; and sounds, like the yellings of an earthly hunt, may be heard in the dumbness of midnight, and which hunting is no less than the chase of the parting soul by these fiends of the sky, as it flies towards heaven's gate before them,—the flight for nothing less than *eternal* life or death! What superstition affecting *mortal* life and its brevity, and its briefer pains, can compare in terror, in wildness, or sublimity with this? With these howlings and huntings for immortal souls, these wildfires trailed by demon bloodhounds, across all the deep-blue *chase* of the midnight heavens, and the issue of this dread hunting never revealed to the mourner, upgazing from the gate of the house of mourning?

“More terrible and forcible in mournful conception is the strange being that crosses the twilight path of the Welsh mountaineer, and which warns him by its mere presence, of a death in his house near at hand. The *Cyowraeth* is the likeness of a woman, frightfully cadaverous of visage, bringing all the festering horror of a three weeks' burial, in its grim yet not utterly disfeatured loathsomeness, abroad into the world of life, divulging the foulest secrets of the grave! This *form* stands direct in some lonesome path of the startled person, tossing her long grisly arms in the air, and wringing her earthy lengths of wasted hand, and, shaking down her already worm-beset hair over her eye-holes, and their sunken dead-lights fixed upon his, steady as the basilisk's on its prey, but gloomy,—sets up such a cry of wild weeping, and utters two words

only, so terrible in their power, that they for the moment arrest the moving blood in the veins of the hearer—the Welsh words signifying ‘Oh, my wife!’ or, ‘Oh, my husband!’ according to the sex of the short-lived object of its fatal forewarning.

“There exists in Wales, also, some vague, superstitious idea of that tremendous kind which gives effect to the *Œdipus*, and to Greek tragedy in general,—the belief in the occasional operation of an overruling destiny, impelling its victims to forbidden deeds, and hence preparing for the really innocent, but apparently guilty, outcasts of human sympathy, penal dooms, and hideous pitfalls of perdition, unforeseen and inevitable! The recurrence of crimes and fates in certain doomed families, may be remarked in English as well as Welsh annals, but I don’t know that any instance, equally striking with what in this country has fallen under my own notice, has been recorded, though such may, doubtless, have really occurred.

“What I allude to is, the existence of one family, in which, for several generations, the behests of law have been working tragedies and decimating its members. The broad features of the fatal fortunes of these persons, as I learned from a clergyman of their district, are these:—They exhibit in early life the very best dispositions. Their first adult years in rustic servitude, or under the paternal roof, fulfil that early promise. Their first *attachment* is followed by a first step in crime—they swerve from the happy and flowered path of their infantine innocence, their youthful industry—but it is *marriage* that seals their dismal

doom. It matters not how prudent, how well-omened that union may appear—the next, and no distant, step is—in blood!

“An old Brecknockshire magistrate in Builth, now deceased, told me, that he had himself, in the course of his life, known three capital convictions of persons belonging to this stock, had seen *two* of these (with an interval) hanging in chains. One odd fact which he added was perhaps more strange than all. A woman—either widow or mother, he forgot which—sate knitting stockings in the sun, *at the foot of the gibbet*, which detained from its parent earth the ghastly carcase of so near a friend. It stood on a corner of a hilly heath, not far from her home.

“Charity might perhaps ascribe this seeming apathy to its contrary, excess of feeling, a morbid melancholy, with as much probability of truth, as to callousness in the woman. If we should go further, and connect the act with the *seeming* dark predestination which had consigned the victim to that sad barred and wind-beat grave in the air, demanding the passing traveller’s curse instead of prayer;—if we should, I say, see in that lone woman’s selecting the many-nailed *gibbet-tree*, with its putrefied burthen or skeleton, for her summer seat, instead of the *green* tree, with its pure fresh head of beauty and shade—only a passive resignation to the congenital curse—to the fate inflicted by it on her seared heart—the image becomes not only affecting, but almost sublime!

“So late as the earlier part of the last century, that strange character of a stranger superstition, known by the name of ‘The Sin-Eater,’ was not unknown in

Wales. This was some desperate being, who (unless we suppose him an unbeliever), being past redemption, lost to all hope of salvation, did, for a slight reward, or to gratify the relatives of one lying dead, take on his own soul all the sins of the deceased by a formal act, sometimes receiving confession during life, and bargaining for the burthens thus to be imposed on his already laden soul.

“Mr. Fosbroke, in an account of the town of Ross, quotes a letter which speaks of a ‘Sin-Eater,’ who ‘lived by Ross highway,’ and is described as a ‘gaunt, ghastly, lean, miserable, poor rascal.’

“A gentleman, who lived a little before the time of this dark superstition becoming obsolete, gives us this brief account of what is believed to have been the last ‘Sin-Eater of Wales.’

“‘I got lost,’ says he, ‘near nightfall, after being landed by the ferry-boat from the Aber of Dovey, on the Cardiganshire side of that estuary. A black turbary of great extent divided me from the road. I was cautioned to ride far round this pitchy bog, for no horse ever ventured among the peat-pits—the whole being a quaking morass. In truth, its look was enough, under a black evening, to keep me off, even without peril of being swallowed, man and horse.

“‘At last, thanks to my stars, the good hard rock of a rough road rung to my horse’s hoof, and I saw a cottage taper, as ghastly as the Canwyll Corph, at a distance. The house was on a high point and turn of road, overlooking all those many acres of hollow ground. Just as I came up, hoping lodging, I heard sounds of wailing within, and soon a woman came out

into the dead night, late as it was, and cried a name to the top pitch of her wild voice, that seemed one I had heard weeping indoors. When I looked in, there lay a corpse of a man, with a plate of salt holding a bit of bread, placed on its breast. The woman was shouting to the Sin-Eater to come and do his office; that is, to eat the bread, lay his hand on the dead breast, place the dead man's on his own, after making a sign of the cross, and then praying for a transfer of all pains or penances from that pardoned dead man for ever, to him that more than dead alive, himself in his death of soul, but not of its pains, for ever and for ever.'

"This is the traveller's account of this incident. He had the curiosity to wait, and saw at last the motion of what seemed a foggy meteor moving toward their standing-point. After waiting long, he caught a far-out shout in reply to the woman's long unanswered, till she kindled on the high road's point the straw of her husband's late bed—the usual signal of a death in the house.

"‘The Sin-Eater,’ he was told, ‘lived alone in a hovel made of sea-wreck, and nails of such, between sea-marsh and that dim bog, where few could approach by day, none dare by night; whether for the footing, or the great fear, or at least awe, which all felt of that recluse.’”

The most pleasant part of the superstitions of Wales is that which is connected with the “Little People,” or Fairies, playing, as they were wont to do, all sorts of merry pranks amongst the inhabitants; dancing by moonlight in blue petticoats, and paying the dairy-maids with silver pennies for the privilege of skimming

their milk-bowls. Dryden laments, and so do we, that

“In vain the dairy now with mint is dressed ;—
The dairymaid expects no fairy guest
To skim the bowls, and after pay the feast.
She sighs ; for ah ! she shakes her stores in vain,
No silver penny to reward her pain.”

I was much surprised at finding the national instrument, the harp, so little cultivated in the different spots I visited in Cardiganshire ; in fact, one blind woman was the only person I heard play upon it ; Nancy Felix, of Gogerddan, to whose neat little cottage many parties make an afternoon's excursion from Aberystwith, and listen to the simple, beautiful old Welsh melodies which the sightless harper delights to hear praised. Nancy Felix is not young, nor has she ever been beautiful ; but her calm, uneducated, yet almost dignified manners, true kind-heartedness, and cheerful resignation to her grievous calamity, rendered her to me a most interesting being. By her playing to parties, she gains support for herself and two sisters ; her pretty cottage and neatly-kept garden (so different to her neighbours') are the kind gifts of her good patron Mr. Bryse, of Gogerddan. The view from her little garden is one of most rare beauty, commanding the Vale of the Rheidol, and various ranges of craggy and woody hills, changing from vivid sunlight to dim shadow as the air-hung clouds glide silently across the landscape. Who can stand beside that sightless harper, and gaze on the glory of such a scene, without feeling how precious is the blessing of which she is deprived,—without fervently thanking God for the enjoyment of this most inestimable boon ?

The copper and lead mines so abundant in Cardigan-shire, invariably lie in the most sterile and rugged districts, and the rich veins of ore are embedded in the hardest and most compact rock, rendering the working of them immensely laborious. The history of these mines, and the various restrictions and regulations to which their possessors have been subjected by the sovereigns of Britain, form a most interesting subject of research: I can here make but a brief allusion to the circumstances. For some centuries after the conquest, the Crown asserted its prerogative in the ownership of all mines and minerals. No person could search for ore, unless empowered by the royal grant; and the conditions imposed were at the discretion of the reigning monarch. The owner of the ground in which a mine was discovered derived no profit from its being worked, till the beginning of Henry VI.'s reign, when the duke of Bedford, regent of France, obtained a lease of all the gold and silver mines within the kingdom for ten years, on payment of a tenth to the church, a fifteenth to the king, and a twentieth to the proprietor of the land. In the year 1452, Henry VI. engaged three miners from the Continent, with their assistants, to work his mines, so profoundly ignorant were the English then of the arts and sciences, from which they now derive so large a portion of their wealth and celebrity. Queen Elizabeth too, by the advice of her council, sent for some experienced Germans to carry on the business of the mines, as well as that of refining and smelting minerals, to whom she granted her letters patent to search for mines of gold, silver, copper, and quicksilver, in various counties of England, and the

Principality of Wales. A year after she made two more grants: one to Cornelius Devosse, and the other to William Humphrey and Christopher Shutz. These foreigners ultimately divided part of their tenure into shares, which they sold, and formed a body, incorporated under the title of "The Governor, Assistants, and Commonalty of the Mines Royal." By all these instruments, as well as by those of former reigns, a power was given to sink shafts anywhere except in gardens, or underneath the foundations of castles or houses. Thus were the mineral resources of the country—instead of being dealt out piecemeal to favourites and courtiers too ignorant or indolent to estimate their value, or pursue their improvement—placed under the direction of such a public body as could remedy in some degree the baneful effects, without abandoning the high pretensions, of an unlimited prerogative. Such was the foundation then laid for those great manufacturing interests, which required, and ultimately obtained, a solid independence, fortified against the attacks of arbitrary power, and exposed to none but the very remote danger of our declining industry as a people.

Public attention now being directed into this channel, the discovery of metallic veins became so frequent, that the company, doubting, perhaps, the success of all the ventures which were proposed to them, began to farm their exclusive rights to enterprising individuals. The Cardiganshire mines, among the most abundant in lead and silver, were, during the whole of the seventeenth century, precisely in this situation.

Sir Hugh Myddelton, whose enterprising character

and great wealth render him somewhat of a hero in mining annals, realized the greater part of his property by farming the chief mines in Cardiganshire, which he held from the Governor and Company of Mines Royal at a yearly rent of four hundred pounds. He coined his silver into crowns, angels, &c., in Aberystwith Castle; and so profitable were his ventures, that from one mine alone, yielding one hundred ounces of silver from one ton of lead, he derived a clear profit of two thousand pounds a month. This princely revenue was all expended in his great work of supplying the city of London with water—an undertaking which had terrified every other adventurer; but which Sir Hugh completed in the reign of James I., who, with his court, was present at the first opening of this great public work. Sir Hugh, like many more public benefactors, impoverished himself for the benefit of thousands, and his family declined into narrow circumstances, while he himself practised as a surveyor, to help his shattered finances. Sir Hugh Myddelton was succeeded in these mines by Mr. Bushell in the reign of Charles I., of whom mention has been made in the account of Aberystwith Castle.

The sojourner at Aberystwith will do well to visit the chief mining-stations around that place, not alone on account of the internal wealth of the mountain-ranges by which he will find himself surrounded, but to become acquainted with the peculiarly wild, vast, and generally sterile character of the scenery. The districts most rich in mineral treasures are almost invariably the most barren in vegetative beauty, but their

"Huge crags and knolls confus'dly hurled,"

broken into rugged glens, or traversed by deep and dark ravines, where the impetuous mountain torrents roar along, are magnificently grand, and serve well to enhance the sylvan loveliness of the graceful vales so often found beside these gloomy regions of hidden wealth.

I know not a better route for showing the gradation of Cardiganshire scenery than the way from Aberystwith to the mines of Daren. The road crossing a high hill, north-east of the town, leads you for some time in view of the luxuriant woods, pastures, and corn-fields, which make the Rheidol valley such a garden of beauty, girt with swelling hills, and watered by its fair river. Shortly, in a narrow but avenue-like lane, you pass Gogerddan, surrounded by all of comfort, luxury, and beauty that nature and art can combine for man's enjoyment. Farther on, after passing the race-ground, the hedgerows become less thickly planted with fine trees, and the landscape loses much of its wooded richness. Soon a straggling dirty village, of such cottages as I have formerly described, offers its divers impediments of pigs, poultry, pots, and pans, to the traveller, and as he emerges from its peat-smoke atmosphere, the scene generally grows more and more wild, cultureless, and vast, till enormous hilly masses of moorland, heaped mountain-wise one over another, form the whole expanse of country, varied only by the silvery threads of gushing streamlets, the alternating tints of gorse and heather, and the thinly scattered dwellings of the peasantry. Amid scenery of this character, on the road to Machynlleth, is the remarkable cist-vaen, supposed by some persons to be the burial-place of the bard

Taliesin, and called Gwely Taliesin, or Taliesin's bed; and the popular superstition is, that should any one sleep a night in this bed, he would the next day become either a poet or a fool. Sir S. R. Meyrick, whose great antiquarian lore entitles his opinions to general credence, considers it rather the monument of a Druid, and the matter-of-fact Camden says, "I take this, and all others of this kind, for old heathen monuments, and am far from believing that ever Taliesin was interred here." The last information we have respecting Taliesin leaves him at the court of King Alfred, who loved so well to retain around him the gifted of his age, that it appears unlikely that the bard would have returned to the comparatively uncivilized region where we find his supposed grave. Many of this poet's compositions are still extant, and have much of the grave, solemn, and peculiar beauty of the ancient Welsh minstrelsy.

CHAPTER IV.

PLINLIMMON—LLANGURIG—RHAIDYR—NEW RADNOR.

High o'er his mates, how huge Plinlimmon lifts
His many-beaconed head!—O'er-coronalled
With still and shadowy mist,—or rolling storms
That speak loud-voiced to the echoing hills,
And rouse repeated thunder.

* * * *

See yon vale,
Where, dancing onward, like a sportive child,
A gushing streamlet frolics in the light,
Gushing from rock to rock, as though its waves
Were the transformed feet of mountain nymph,
And these her wonted haunts. And even so
May our fantastic fancy deem her yet—
That brook is e'en Plinlimmon's fairest child—
The peerless WYE.—L. A. TWANLEY.

HITHERTO I have been wandering at will, and leading my readers in an erratic and uncertain track, whither chance and my wayward fancy directed. Now our path will be restricted, at least for the present, to the banks of the river Wye, which, as our heroine for the time being, shall receive careful attention in our proposed biographical and topographical memoir.

My own Wye-ward progress having been made from Aberystwith, I cannot, perhaps, do better than marshal my readers the way I went. On quitting the interesting

vale of the Rhaidol (by the new road to Rhaiadry), stupendous mountains close in on every side, round which the road is carried, winding along the precipitous sides, without the semblance of a fence for the consolation of the nervous or timid traveller, save a few whited stones, placed at intervals on the verge of the perpendicular ravine which yawns below, to indicate the curve to be taken by the skilful charioteer. At the time of my passing these magnificent scenes, the gorse,

"That bonny wild flower,
Whose blossoms so yellow, and branches so long,
O'er moor and o'er rough rocky mountain are flung,
Far away from trim garden and bower,"

was blooming in its most lavish loveliness of hue and fragrance, perfuming the clear mountain air with its soft breath, and shedding a rich golden light over the wide untenanted hills, then calmly sleeping in the glow of a summer afternoon sky. The heather, too, spread far around its pink and purple bells, where the wild bees were busily humming and gathering their sweet store in the merry sunshine.

Ere crossing the upmost ridge of this mountain-chain, a most lovely view of Cardigan Bay greeted me; there it lay, sunlit to the horizon, and specked with a fairy array of white-winged, gleaming vessels, softly, and to me imperceptibly, gliding along. It was a beautiful, yet a sad view; for I left much that was dear behind, perhaps never to see again; and, albeit a wanderer in many lands, my heart has room for fond memories of them all. Either the bright sunlight dazzled my eyes, or something dimmed them, so I went

on my way—if not rejoicing, at least in that half-subdued, thoughtful mood, which best suited the grand, calm solitude around.

Journeying on through defiles cut in the solid rock, and then over a wild dreary tract of country, covered with turbaries, and intersected by vein-like streamlets traversing the mimic valleys of the turf in all directions, I reached the comparatively good inn at Pont Herwid.

Proceeding to the white rails in front of the house, to see what they inclosed, my amazement may be imagined at finding myself on the verge of a tremendous chasm, in whose deep and dark abyss the Rheidol roars along, chafing the stupendous rocks on either side, which seem to leave too narrow a path for the foaming furious torrent. The perfectly horizontal position, and regular structure, of the square and sharp masses of rock which form one side of this ravine, give them in many places the appearance of fortifications and castle-walls; while those on the opposite bank, perhaps not more than fifty feet asunder, are seen assuming forms utterly dissimilar in aspect and direction to those from which they have evidently been separated by some great convulsion of the earth; the disruption occasioning the deep crack or ravine through which the Rheidol now flows the whole way to the Pont ar Monach, whose wild and fearful scenery scarcely exceeds that around Pont Herwid.

The Rheidol wears the usual mountain-stream hue here of dark brown, and as its heavy waters roll along the deep gulf below the dizzy traveller, they look almost black in the shadow of the huge barriers which

shut out any but a vertical sun from the dim recesses of this wild ravine. The Castell, a purer and nearly colourless stream, flowing from an opposite direction, meets the Rheidol at this spot, and, plunging down a narrow defile in the rocks, forms a magnificent cascade, flinging its scattered streamers of snowy foam, sparkling in the upper air, to join the murky heavy-rolling waves of the larger river below. The whole scene is wondrously, indescribably grand and beautiful; and the rich purple of the heather-bells, the pink tinge of the ling, the scarlet berries of the mountain-ash, gleaming out from their graceful fringe-like foliage, grouped with the elegant form of the birch, which seems to bend over the ravine as trying to see its delicate branches mirrored in the stream so turbulently boiling along below—with a thousand minuter beauties gemming both turf and crag with their exquisite forms and colours—all smiling in the sunlight, as if exulting in their own fair loveliness, combined to render this a scene for memory to cherish for aye.

A picturesque mill, with its busy wheel and foaming stream, very agreeably enlivens the near landscape, while the cloud-capped mountains rise majestically above to complete this unimaginable scene.

The windings of the chasm or ravine are very singular and abrupt. I thought, as I stood gazing in rapt admiration on their tortuous and rugged sides, what a beautiful thing it would be—though certainly only practicable for a bird—to follow the Rheidol through all these wild glens and dingles, down to its union with the Mynach, and so on to Aberystwith.

Beyond Pont Herwid the road becomes less inter-



"History of the Falls of the Rhine, 1847"

W. H. H. H.

THE FALLS OF THE RHINE, 1847
near the Falls of the Rhine



esting, and the prospect less varied, though very grand and exalting. How free one's spirit feels among these trackless mountains! No marvel is it to me that the Cymru of old were all but unconquerable—the very sight of their hills is enough to make a patriot's spirit arise in the tamest heart.* Dwellers among mountains have ever been dearer lovers and braver defenders of their native climes than the sojourners on monotonous and level tracts of country. The Switzers, the Tyrolese, the Highlanders, and the Welsh, are ample proofs of this. Even a transient glimpse of such scenes as their lives were passed among, has its effect both on mind and body. How boundingly we traverse the high and breezy hills! The fresh, free air seems to elevate and purify our thoughts; and the foot, treading the springy heather, gains swiftness and elasticity as it bounds along. We sing aloud in simple youthful exultation, and feel as if we could soar through the bright blue sky above us like the lark;—such glad and buoyant beings can an hour's life on these hills create out of staid, sober, matter-of-fact worldlings.

Our next resting-place bears the sounding name of the "Plinlimmon Hotel," a small wayside hostel at Eisteddfa Gurrig, so grandiloquized; and hence, pro-

* King Henry II., in answer to the inquiries of Emanuel, emperor of Constantinople, respecting Britain, replied: "That in a part of the island there was a people called Welsh, so bold and ferocious, that when unarmed, they did not fear to encounter an armed force, being ready to shed their blood in defence of their country, and to sacrifice their lives for military renown;" and Giraldus speaks of their constant readiness to do battle; "for," says he, "when the trumpet sounds, the husbandman leaves his plough, and rushes to the onset with as much eagerness as the courtier from the palace."—*Jones's History of Wales.*

curing a guide, the summit of the hoary mountain is generally ascended. Being rendered dangerous by swamps and turbaries, this journey is not very frequently attempted; nor is the view, for which these perils are risked, a sufficient reward for the toil and difficulty of the pilgrimage, even when the atmosphere is tolerably clear, which is rarely the case. However, supposing all things propitious, the panoramic prospect from the mountain-top, at an altitude of two thousand four hundred and sixty-three feet, will include in its wide-spreading outline the many ridges of the Cardiganshire hills, lying in wavy extent beneath, and expanding in various directions; on the north appears Cader Idris, and part of the Snowdonian chain; to the east and north-east stretch the high lands of Hereford and Salop, and the Breidden hills; on the west lies the wide expanse of Cardigan's fair bay, with the Channel, and perhaps a faint line on the horizon, which is Ireland.

Plinlimmon is famed in historic annals as having been an important station occupied by the renowned Owen Glyndwr, in the summer of 1401, who here posted himself at the head of his men in arms. From this place he harassed the country exceedingly; sacked Montgomery, burnt Pool, and destroyed the Abbey of Cwm Hîr, in Radnorshire; his intrenchments still remain on his mountain citadel. In a bog near the summit was found the blade of a two-edged British spear, which is supposed to have been used in the army of the Welsh hero.

Numerous birds frequent this spot—ravens, cranes, herons, snipes, both the lesser and greater, with flocks

of plovers. The hill has little vegetative beauty to smooth its rugged features of wild, sterile grandeur; towards the summit patches of coarse grass mingle with heaps of loose stones and fragments of rock which lie all around, among which are quantities of very pure quartz. Amid these blocks of quartz are numerous hillocks of peat earth, so light as to be driven about by the wind like sand-hills on the sea-coast. The summit is divided into two heads, upon each of which is a *carnedd*. That on the highest peak is of a pyramidal shape. These were supposed to have contained blazing fires, in times of war, which might be seen from more than ten counties, and thus to have been anciently used as beacons, to give notice of an approaching enemy. It is held as a sacred custom among most of the Welsh who visit the mountain, to add one or more stones to the heap.

The chief celebrity of this hill-king of Southern Cambria is the circumstance of five rivers having their origin among its knolls and *cwms*, for Plinlimmon is rather a group of three mountains, each of which consists of many lesser ones, piled pyramid-wise into one gigantic heap, than a single mountain; and from their fissures and dislocations flow forth the several streams of the Severn, the Rheidol, the Llyffnant, the Clewedog, and the Wye.

In its early youth, the Wye is the most important of these sister-rivers, and thence its name of Gwy or Wye, signifying "the river;" and though in magnitude the stately Sabrina soon surpasses our fair favourite, in loveliness she is unrivalled, and these pages must be to her as knights of old, proclaiming her peerless charms,

and calling in the artist-witnesses to prove the truth of their statements. Following the Wye from her source, amid turbaries and swamps, I soon found myself journeying side by side with a gay, sportive streamlet, playful as a child, dancing merrily down the glen, frisking about in foam and spray if a stone or a rock chanced to offer a pretext for a splashy gambol, and wearing the russet tint of her neighbour streams. Mountains—glorious mountains—cradle the young beauty as she bounds into light, and long do they shelter her amid their fortress-rocks, and bend their hoary heads over her frolicsome path, like aged grand-sires smiling fondly and calmly on the vagaries of the petted child, who tumbles and gambols around their feet.

Feeling disposed to remain in the immediate vicinity of such wild and magnificent scenery as the early part of the Wye's progress led me into, I determined to take up my night's quarters at the first inn which presented itself; accordingly, on entering Llangurig, a place honoured in all travellers' note-books with the cognomen of "wretched," I halted at the open door of what I half-instinctively felt to be *the* house of entertainment, and, as it proved, the only one in the place. "My good woman," said I, addressing a mob-capped personage, who appeared at my rather noisy summons,—"my good woman, can I have a bed here to-night?" "I thinks iss; but it was not one to like." "Never mind—let me see it." "Iss, but you wass not like hur." She was right, I did not like it, indeed—a hay-loft had been luxurious in comparison—but here was no hayloft neither, so I had no alternative but to

proceed to Rhaiadry. However, a blazing peat fire tempted me to the kitchen, and while making a hurried repast, I was indulged with Welsh singing, much rapid Welsh converse, and peals of light-hearted laughter from the merry crowd of both sexes there congregated, among whom it seemed—I hope I do not scandalize the ladies by so saying,—that the stout Welsh ale was doing its wonted magical work.

The fire was divided into two portions: over one hung a huge iron pot, with a flat lid, on the top of which lay five or six blazing clods of peat turf. On inquiry, I found this was the family oven, or, in other words, “she wass to fire bread in;” and inside was a loaf of wheaten flour of most comely dimensions, similar to the one I had been laying rather vigorous siege to, and which was excellent household bread, though, had my appetite been less keenly sharpened by Plinlimmon’s cool breezes, I might perhaps have objected to a slight flavour of peat smoke, which is not quite so great a desideratum in bread as in whiskey. The walls and rafters of this apartment-of-all-work were well garnished with bacon, cheese, and other substantial; and truly the “house” had no lack of custom; though I could wish, for my own and other travellers’ comfort, that it was one of a better class. The hostess evidently wished so too, and doubtless, ere long, Llangurig will boast of “superior accommodation.” The village, though mean and squalid in itself, is finely situated on the north bank of the Wye, and surrounded with lofty mountains, the lower portions of which are in some places clothed with wood.

When I left Llangurig, the full-orbed moon was just

rising above the ridge of hills to the eastward, and her strong, clear light, together with the host of bright stars peeping through the deep dark blue sky, left me no reason to regret the "garish light of day;" for all the features of the grand and beautiful scenery I traversed were visible in the calm, quiet hue which invested them.

On my right hand, side by side with the road, flowed the Wye, seen ever and anon through the intervening trees; her clear waves glancing brightly in the silvery moonbeams; and here and there, where a few rocks interrupted the fair nymph's progress, chafing and foaming along in a series of rapids, as if conscious how well a little wrath became her. On either side of the river rose stupendous hills—mountains were a more correct term—with their feet in the vale, and their heads soaring far in the starry sky—craggy and cleft, and worn into many a fantastic ravine by the cascade-streamlets that rush down their steep sides, bringing tributary waters to the Wye. Glorious, in their silent, shadowy grandeur, were those half-seen mountains, rearing their storm-riven heads like giant spectres, and looking sternly and scornfully on little things below. The whole scene, the soft moonlight, the lofty mountains, and the "shining river," made so sweet a picture, that I would it were here in effigy to gladden the eyes of my readers, as it did my own in its fair reality. Journeying on, I passed many lovely green-looking glens, where the sound of the tumbling, gurgling water, and an occasional splash of feathery foam, told of a torrent's path amid verdure and flowers.

On approaching Rhaiadyr, after passing the Nanneth



St. Martin's Church, Brighton



rocks, the bed of the river changes considerably in character. Through the valley, near Llangurig, it has been bordered by low turf-banks, here it becomes narrower and rocky, being, in fact, a chasm through which the confined waters roar and struggle along in loud chiding anger. The river is now one continued series of rapids and cascades, overhung and fringed by places,—

“With many a tree and many a flower,
Decking the Naiad's mountain-bower;
Shading her heaving foam-white breast,
Or gaily crowning the dark rock's crest.”

Very, very beautiful is that wood-hung torrent ravine, and the more beautiful because its perpetual curves and turnings prevent the enamoured eye from grasping much of the scene at once, and being satisfied; but by ever keeping some dainty bit in reserve, and giving out its beauty by degrees, the eye wearies not.

The town of Rhaiadyr itself presents little to interest the traveller; it consists of two long straggling streets, crossing each other at right angles, with an old town-hall in the centre. The situation is most enchanting, on a rising bank eastward of the Wye, surrounded by magnificent ranges of mountains, whose intervening valleys are rich in verdure and cultivation, watered by clear and rapid streams, and enlivened by scattered cottages.

No vestiges remain of the castle, which, during the dominion of the Welsh princes, was a station of much importance; it stood on the Wye bank, north-east of the town.

The elevated bridge, springing from one rock-base

and resting upon another, with the falls of the river immediately below it, form the most picturesque scene to be found in the vicinity of Rhaiadyr. The Wye, now become a large and important stream, rushes through the one grand and lofty arch of the bridge, and, flowing rapidly onwards, is suddenly flung over a group of rugged masses of rock, forming a wide, varied, and beautiful cascade. The name of the town, Rhaiadyr Gwy, is derived from this fall of the Wye, or Gwy—Rhaiadyr signifying a cataract, and Gwy a river,—a name given pre-eminently to this river, from its being, at the outset, the largest of Plinlimmon's streams, and so called Gwy, or *the* river.

A few miles from Rhaiadyr, in a delightful valley, the persevering antiquarian may gratify his love for the departing glories of monastic fanes, by imagining that he can trace the remains of the ancient and renowned monastery of Abbey Cwm Hir, on the banks of the Clewedog, formerly a religious house, founded, according to Leland, by Cadwallon ab Madoc, in 1143, for sixty Cistercian monks, and destroyed in 1401, by Owen Glyndwr. It is, however, in its site, according to the good taste of the holy men of old, in the midst of an amphitheatre of hills, calculated to inspire sublime and devotional thoughts, with its foot washed by the Clewedog, which flows on in everlasting murmurs. This place was for many years in the possession of the Fowlers, who came here in the time of Elizabeth; and a Welsh adage of this part expresses the importance they then enjoyed.

"There's neither park nor deer in Radnorshire,
Or a man worth five hundred a year,
Except Sir William Fowler of Abbey Cwmhir."



VIEW OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGE,
near Rhinecliff





Portions of the carvings and masonry have been carried away, from time to time, for the erection of farm-buildings, so that the few relics left of the once "grande abbaye" are trifling and unsatisfactory to the traveller. Many, also, have been transported to other sacred edifices, especially the six beautiful arches in the church of Llanidloes. At an earlier date in its history, this abbey had a narrow escape from destruction, as is related by that celebrated antiquary Lambarde, in these words:—"What tyme *Hen. III.* made an Expedition into *Wales* against *Luellin*, and had pitched not farre from *Mountgomerye*; *Luellin* had made an Ambushe to take him, wherof the Kinge havinge Intelligence, sent a sufficient Power an other Way then *Luellin* looked for them, and had taken him, had not a Monke of this House bothe advertised *Luellin* of this Purpose, and also most deceitfullye trayned the Kinge's Souldiours into a Myre, under Colour to shew them a most easie Passage. Suche as escaped complayned of the Fraude, the Kinge moved withe the Monke, and findinge moreover that the House it selfe had succoured *Luellin*, comaunded Fire to be put to it. The Abbot came knelinge, and offered by his Freindes 300 Markes for amendes, the which the Kinge with muche adoe at last receyved, and saved the House."

Numerous *carneddau* arise on the heights around this neighbourhood, and tumuli are not unfrequently seen; but the chief charm it boasts is the wild and magnificent character of its natural beauties—its frowning mountains, romantic glens, and torrent streams. To acquire a right conception of these glories, a wanderer could scarcely pursue a better route than the one I will here briefly sketch for the benefit

of any who may condescend to follow my track. Quitting Rhaiadyr, and passing over the bridge, choose the northward road—the old road to Aberystwith; it leads gradually along the side of a steep cliff-like hill, overhanging a green little valley, turfed like a lawn, sprinkled with cottage dwellings, and bounded by the everlasting hills, while in its very bosom lies a lake—black, even in the laughing sunshine—like an ink-spot on the verdant carpet. Toiling wearily onwards, for the hill up which we ascend is four *long* miles, and, as the landlord of mine inn rather poetically observed, “you seem to be going to heaven,”—ground comparatively level is at length gained—a high, wide, swelling moorland, crowned in several places by *carnau* and *tumuli*, and extending around, far as the eye can reach, in one vast undulating waste, untenanted and uncultivated. The solitary grandeur of the scene is impressively beautiful, and the countless skylarks which people the clear air with their sweet voices, warbling their most eloquent music blithely around, add to the stern majesty of Nature her choicest melody. Springing from the turf within a few feet of the solitary wanderer, they soar past him, their quivering twinkling wings soon lost in the deep expanse of the cloudless summer sky, and their songs, like spirit-voices, greeting him from forms unseen. I involuntarily exclaimed, in the words of the poet Hogg—

“Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o’er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Dlest is thy dwelling-place,
Oh! to abide in the desert with thee!”

Beside the road, and trickling down among the rocks or knolls of the hills, a hundred little streamlets are dancing and sparkling along, while flowers minute, but wondrously beautiful in their miniature forms and delicate colours, enamel the turf, and sweeten it for the straggling and timid sheep. Here and there, a grave-looking, pompous raven hopped heavily about, and seemed to be taking accurate observations of my movements in his neighbourhood; but no human shapes appeared in sight, until, descending on the opposite side of this moorland, I found a party of peat-cutters busily at work in a turbary, stacking and carrying their winter stock of fuel.

Descending to the valley, the traveller should cross the Elan, and then, trusting himself to the river's guidance, follow it through all its fantastic curves, now through a bleak rocky ravine, then through a vale of fairy-like beauty, till he arrive at Cwm Elan, the paradise of the district, created, like Hafod, out of bare and cultureless land. The poet Bowles has devoted one of his sweetest descriptions to Cwm Elan; I cannot forbear quoting a few of his graceful pencilling lines:—

“Now wind we up the glen, and hear below
The dashing torrent in deep woods concealed,
And now again, while flashing on the view,
O'er the huge craggy fragments—
But loftier scenes invite us; pass the hill,
And through the woody hanging, at whose feet
The tinkling Elan winds, pursue thy way.
Yon bleak and weather-whitened rock, immense
Upshoots amid the scene, craggy and steep,
And like some high embattled citadel
That awes the low plain shadowing. Half way up
The purple heath is seen, but bare its brow,

And deep-intrenched, and all beneath it spread
With massy fragments riven from its top.
Amid the crags, and scarce discerned on high,
Hangs here and there a sheep, by its faint bleat
Discovered, while th' astonished eye looks up,
And marks it on the precipice's brink
Pick its scant food secure. Now through the wood
We steal, and mark the old and mossy oaks
Emboss the mountain's slope ; or the wild ash,
With rich, red clusters mantling ; or the birch
In lonely glens light-wavering ; till behold,
The rapid river shooting through the gloom
Its lucid line along."

Such is the lovely valley of the Elan, and well do its
myriad beauties repay the wanderer's toil.

Before proceeding on my Wye pilgrimage, it may
perhaps appear but correct that proper respect be paid
to the county town of New Radnor, which is, however,
but a mean, squalid-looking place, though in far-distant
times it was of much greater importance, having been
inclosed by a square wall, with four Roman gates,
bearing some resemblance to those at the stations of
Caerleon and Caerwent. Its castle, which formerly
occupied a high artificial mound north-west of the
town, was finally demolished by those determined and
persevering levellers, the Parliamentarians, during the
civil wars. The decline of Radnor is dated from Owen
Glyndwr, who destroyed the castle then existing, and
ravaged all the surrounding district. A fragment of a
foundation, composed of the black slate or flag-stone
of the neighbourhood, is all now left, save the earth-
works which adjoin the churchyard. The church is an
old and simple structure, with a low square tower, and
very few narrow windows ; an antique sundial and

some fine old yew-trees adorn the small inclosure surrounding it. The view from the castle tump of the vale of Radnor, taking in Radnor Forest, and the rich, garden-like country towards Presteign, is exceedingly beautiful.

“Old Radnor,” saith Leland, “was annycently called Maiseveth, of the faire and pleasant meadowes that the ryver of Wye maketh thearabout;” but it has long been a place of small importance, and is now chiefly noticeable for its fine old church, which occupies a commanding situation on a rock, and contains a screen richly carved in wood, extending, contrary to the usual custom, across the nave and two side aisles, and some handsome monuments to the family of Lewis of Harpston, whose seat is in the vicinity. Mean as this place may now appear, it was once a Roman station, called by Marcus Antoninus the city Magnos, where the Pacensian legion lay in garrison, under the command of a lieutenant of Britain, in the time of Theodosius the Younger. In more modern days, it entertained to supper Charles I., in his flight from the Parliamentary forces, after the disastrous battle of Naseby.

Not far from Old Radnor are the Stanner Rocks, a volcanic group, highly picturesque in form and magnitude, and bearing in their almost inaccessible clefts numbers of rare and beautiful wild flowers, in *honour* of which one part is vulgarly called the Devil’s Garden. The stone being of a hard compact texture, and useful for road-making, these singular and interesting rocks are in a fair way for demolition, being quarried to a great extent. About three miles from the Stanner Rocks is Knill Court, a tasteful residence in one of the

loveliest spots imaginable. Within the grounds stands the small and simple ivy-grown church, where Sir Samuel Romilly was interred. A stream runs at the foot of the steep, but not lofty bank, on which the house and gardens stand, and opposite rise the wooded and magnificent hills of Knill Garraway and the Her-rock, both traversed by Offa's Dyke. At a very short distance is an ancient encampment on Burva Bank, and pursuing the road to Presteign, the grand lime rocks at Nash are equally welcome to the eyes of painter or geologist; to the one for their noble forms, to the other for the organic remains they contain.

The cheerful and orderly appearance of modern Presteign forms a pleasing variety to the generality of towns in Radnorshire, and offers a singular contrast to its ancient condition, when it was celebrated as a place of British worship to Andras, the goddess of confusion and the woods. The church is adorned, in the interior, by painted figures and scriptural inscriptions. It contains, also, some monumental tablets, and an altar-piece of tapestry, representing Christ's entry into Jerusalem. The Castle of Presteign, like so many of its compeers in former feudal grandeur and tyranny, has vanished from its place. The site, called the Warden, is now more worthily occupied by pleasant winding walks, shaded by beautiful trees, and affording glimpses of the surrounding most lovely scenery. The remarkably fine encampment of Weobly, or Wapley Hill, is only four miles distant from Presteign. To the antiquarian this is a highly interesting relic, being one of the most perfect camps remaining in Britain. It is irregularly oval; on the east, west, and south, are four ditches; but the north, being nearly inaccessible, is only defended by a single

vallum, which runs along the brow of the hill. It is said to have been originally thrown up by the Romans ; but Caractacus occupied it for a considerable time with a formidable force. How changed is now the scene of former martial pomp and warlike tumult ! Instead of armed legions of soldiery, thronging with heavy tread the crowded camp, the innocent rabbits go springing over the heather—sole tenants, save the wild birds, of this “great station.” Where bristling lines of spears were wont to girdle the whole hill-side, an ocean of fern-leaves are waving gracefully in the summer breeze ; and on the steepest side of the hill, called the Warren Wood, is a rich plantation of young oaks, full of lovely labyrinthine walks and arcades, redolent of the perfume of all sweet flowers that love the shade, and abounding in rare and delicate plants. Some silver coins have been dug up in this station, and on the eastern eminence a bell-metal pot was discovered, which had probably been used to hold burning pitch, as a gathering or warning beacon, in former times of invasion, or internecine warfare.

The panoramic view from the summit is one of great extent and varied beauty. The vale of Radnor, rich and luxuriant, opens to the west, backed by the gloomy and swelling outlines of the forest hills. Presteign, and the villas of Broadheath and Stapleton, appear on the north. Southward the eye recognises the Skyrrid, Sugarloaf, and Black mountains—May Hill, Malvern hills, and many more, which, as this digression to New Radnor and Presteign savours somewhat of truantism from our liege lady and heroine—the fair Wye, we pause not now to describe ; yet as few would journey back to Rhaiadyr without visiting the chief lion of the

Radnor neighbourhood, a brief notice may be here allowed of the wild cataract, called fantastically Water-break-its-neck. Quitting the highroad about a mile from New Radnor, I entered a glen of highland wildness, between great hills spread far and wide around, swelling suddenly upward from the craggy banks of the clear mountain streamlet, which flows through the narrow valley in a meandering course over a rocky bed, forming miniature pictures of cascades and rapids. Small silvery thread-like lines, glittering among the turf on the distant heights, showed where the tributary waters were trickling down; and ever and anon a troop of playful sheep, chasing each other along the hill-side, might be seen leaping lightly across the small ravines worn by these petty cataracts, which, when swollen by wintry rains, sweep down in full and formidable volume. On I wandered—along this wild glen, which seemed to grow yet more dreary and solitarily grand as I advanced. Still keeping close to the stream, and often crossing it by springing from one piece of rock to another, I arrived at an abrupt turning, which placed me at once in a cavern-like ravine of almost naked slate rocks, rising high and dark on either side, like walls of masonry mouldering with age, seeming ready to topple over and crush the passing traveller, yet here and there, richly hung with trees and parasite plants:—

“ High

The rock's bleak summit frowns above our head,
Looking immediate down; we almost fear
Lest some enormous fragment should descend
With hideous sweep into the vale, and crush
The intruding visitant. No sound is here,

Save of the stream that shrills, and now and then
A cry as of faint wailing, when the kite
Comes sailing o'er the crags, or straggling lamb
Bleats for its mother."

Continuing along this defile, another sudden turn leads to the front of the fall, which is similar to the one at Pwll Caradoc, though less lofty, and not so richly wooded. The rocks form a narrow, high amphitheatre, over which the water is precipitated from the height of seventy feet, and falling into a dark pool, meanders away among the fragments of rock, until it gains the more open glen whence I had traced its course. A more wild and savage scene could scarcely be realized; but its terrific effect must be greatly increased when the melted snow and falling rain have increased the volume of the waters, till they roll down, not in one, but in five or six cascades, dashing and foaming in all their wrath and power. It is remarkable that trout of a large size have been found in all parts of this fall, even in the chinks and crevices of the rock, where the turbulent waters find a momentary resting-place. It is a spot of considerable danger, and one traveller relates having seen the carcasses of two sheep and a goat, which had fallen from the slippery heights into this dismal chasm.

Llandegley, a neat little village celebrated for its medicinal springs of sulphureous vitriolic water, lies on the way to Rhaiadry, and is well worthy a brief sojourn, for the sake of its attractive scenery. A very singular range of rocks, abounding in quartz crystals, nearly joins the churchyard, and is much visited both for the views it commands, and the glittering treasures which may be won from its clefts and sides.

CHAPTER V.

WYE SCENERY FROM RHAIADYR TO BUILTH— ABEREDWY—GLASBURY—HAY.

Now a little onward, where the way
Ascends above the oaks that far below
Shade the rude steep, let contemplation lead
Our wary steps; from this clothed eminence
'Tis pleasant, and yet fearful, to look down
Upon the river roaring, and far off
To see it stretch in peace, and mark the rocks
One after one, in solemn majesty
Unfolding their wild reaches, here with wood
Mantled, beyond abrupt and bare, and each
As if it strove with emulous disdain
To tower in ruder, darker amplitude.—BOWLES.

GENTLE readers, we will now return to the Wye, and pursue our journey from Rhaiadyr. Would that ye could all behold the scenes to which my pleasant wanderings conducted me; would that ye could see them, as I did, arrayed in their brightest and loveliest garb. The fairy sovereigns of the "skyey influences" never bestowed a more heavenly morning on mortal pilgrim, than they vouchsafed to me for my journey to Builth. The bend of the Wye below Rhaiadyr was a picture ready arranged for any prince of landscape-painters. The broad quiet river, skirted with rich woods, indicating the course of the stream by their curving direc-

tion; the distant town, half hidden beneath its light smoky mist; the bright meadow foreground, with a group of idle, happy boys basking in the warm sunshine, and pulling flowers among the grass, while near them a lusty white horse, which would have done well for the pencil of Wouvermans, slowly and enjoyingly forded the clear brown stream—these were the *near* objects in the landscape, all engirt by the high hills, standing out in bright relief against the pure blue sky, their cwms intersecting them with lines of shadow, and meadows and cornfields bordering the slope, with their cheerful patchwork of inclosures: it was a scene which deserved to be immortalized by one of the noblest sons of the noble art.

Wending onwards, my road lay along the side of a gigantic, craggy, woody mountain, Gwastaden by name, on whose lofty summit are some of the largest carnau in the county. Opposite the abrupt turn which the road makes over this promontory-shaped hill at Aberdaw ddwr, the vale of the Elan opens to view, and its fair river joins the Wye, after passing under a light, simple, wooden bridge, which, with one or two finely-situated farm-steads on the river's bank, adds a sort of living, social beauty to the scene. The wooden bridges in Wales particularly please my fancy; they are so evidently built for use, and not ostentation; and where one of the cumbrous, hump-backed brick affairs, we so abound in here, would shut out all of beauty beyond it, these more simple and suitable fabrics add to a fine scene, by their picturesque and unobtrusive forms, without hiding one other charm.

Still passing on, round the grand Gwastaden, the

scene is constantly varying on the right, as we view the two vales of the Wye and Elan in different positions, ever lovely, ever new, while on the left, rude massy crags in picturesque disorder maintain their stern harsh features, gradually deepening in tone from the clearly-seen rocks and heather in the foreground, to the dim, yet rich, purple of the o'ercrowning and distant peaks. The vale of the Wye soon expands into a considerable flat, where the rock-chafed river murmurs between broad turfy banks, tenanted by large flocks of geese, who were most industriously picking their living among the swamps and rushes. Swans had been more classical adjuncts to the scene; but *all* travellers have not the power of transmuting homely into honourable things; and for my own part I deemed the snowy geese very pretty and entertaining personages, parading their grassy realm, as if they conceived nothing on earth more lordly than themselves, and stretching their sapient heads disdainfully and contemptuously in the air, at the approach of so mean an animal as a poor pedestrian wanderer—verily these geese strongly resembled bipeds of another class.

About four miles from Rhaiadyr, the small village and tiny church of Llanwrthwl look out from their mountain nest of wood and heather upon the broad river below, whose course we now pursue through the woods skirting its eastern bank, which only allow occasional peeps of the opposite towering hills, also belted with avenues and groups of fine trees. Numerous residences are erected in this vicinity, blending the cultivated and beautiful with the wild and stern most harmoniously.






W. K. K. K.

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Proceeding along the road towards Builth, I occasionally diverged to the right, and walked along the banks of the sparkling river. Fresh vales, and hills, and streams, opened in all their loveliness as I advanced. On my left lay the hill called Rhiw Graid, and two or three miles beyond, the high and frowning peak of Dôlevan Hill, a huge cone-shaped "monarch of the upper air," surrounded by a number of farms. Regaining the high road, I soon reached the little village of Newbridge, opposite to Llys-dinam, where, as intimated by the name, a bridge crosses the Wye.

Four miles from Builth the Wye receives the tributary waters of the river Ithon, whose course is marked by the same features of grandeur and romantic loveliness as distinguish the more important stream. The small, but singularly varied and rich scene about Pont ar Ithon, is scarcely exceeded by any on the Wye *above* Ross. The Ithon flows past Llandrindod, whose mineral springs still attract invalid visitors, and which is an interesting neighbourhood to the antiquary, from the many Druidic and other remains which it possesses. Another winding river, the Irvon, falls into the Wye, just above Builth, at which place a fine bridge spans the now wide stream over which we enter the town.

Builth, like Rhaiadyr, and all other towns in such splendid scenery, is finely and picturesquely situated, and, seen from any of the surrounding heights, looks pretty enough itself; but on a nearer inspection, the streets prove narrow and zigzag, and contain but few good houses. It is said by the chronicler Jones to have derived its name, Built, or Bualt, "from its having been woody or boscase land." The Brecknock-



shire historian complains that the town, "from one end to the other, is a continuation of shops and public houses," which he accounts for from the "considerable tract of country that is to be supplied from this place; there being no market for fifteen miles round."*

The Castle of Builth has shared the fate of its contemporaries at Rhaiadyr, Radnor, Presteign, and divers other places, formerly held in feudal bondage by the owners and rulers of their respective fortresses; its existing ruins, comprising only a fragment of a foundation-wall on the north side of the keep-mound, which is forty or fifty yards in circumference, is encircled by a ditch, and defended on the north side by two trenches. These earthworks remain in tolerable distinctness, and form a favourite walk for the inhabitants of the town: they occupy about two acres of ground, and command an extensive view of the river Wye, and the vale of Builth, and a wide circle of mountains both near and distant; some enriched with forests, but the greater portion consisting of wild moorland and broken rocky ground. Brecknockshire, on the verge of which county Builth is situated, abounds in luxuriant and cultivated valleys.

History furnishes us with no account of the original founder of Builth Castle, nor the time of its erection; but it was most probably constructed by Bernard Newmarch, who also built the Castle and Pories of Brecknock, and many others. During the wars of the brave Welsh princes with King John, Builth Castle was several times besieged. In 1217, on the accession of Henry III., when Reginald de Bruce, neglectful of his

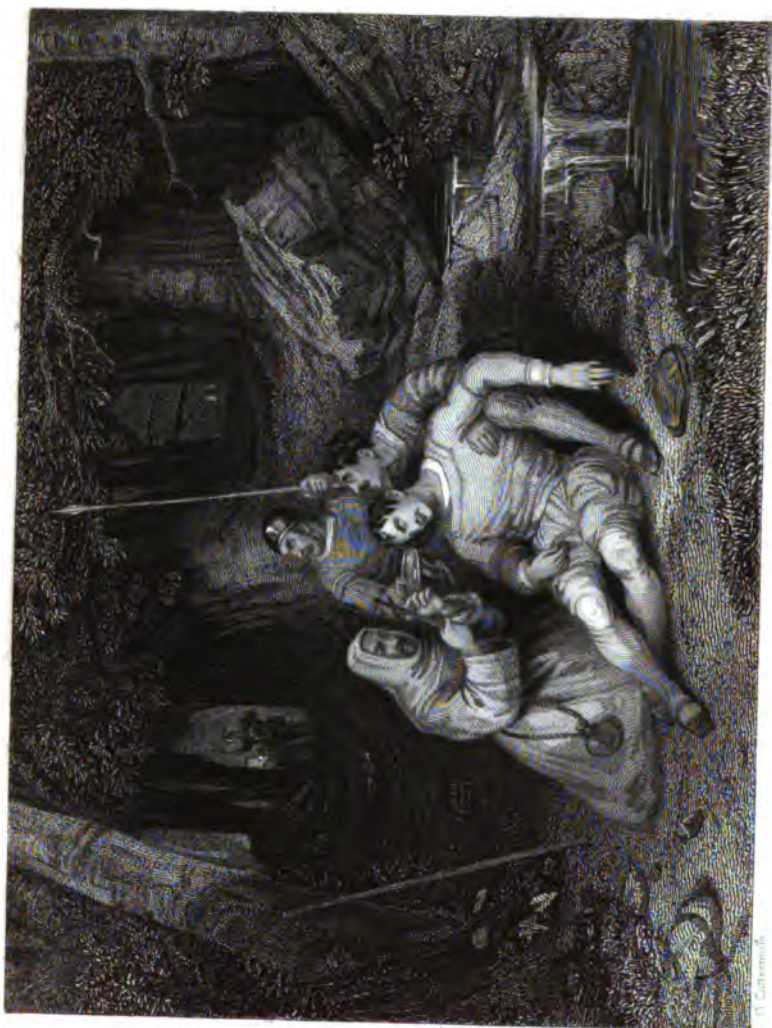
* Jones's "History of Brecknockshire," vol. ii.

allegiance to the prince Llewelyn ap Jorwerth, whose daughter he had married, went over to the English monarch, Llewelyn, turning his generally victorious arms against his faithless ally, despoiled him of all his important possessions except the Castle of Builth, which was so well garrisoned and defended as to resist the summons of its superior lord. In 1221, Reginald de Bruce was besieged in the same fortress by a party of Welsh lords; but King Henry, to whom he had remained constant, came with an army and raised the siege. In 1260, Llewelyn ap Gruffydd took this castle in the night, without opposition or bloodshed, from Roger de Mortimer, who then possessed it, and adhered to the English king, contrary to his solemn vows of allegiance to Llewelyn. It is supposed that a bridge, leading immediately to the castle, formerly existed a few yards lower down the Wye than the present structure, which was erected in 1770, and is a long and well-looking edifice.

The circumstance, however, which gives to this place its greatest interest in the eyes both of natives and travellers, is, that it was the final retreat of the gallant but unfortunate Llewelyn, the last of the Welsh princes who held the regal power. This monarch, after having ravaged the lands of one of his recreant barons in Cardiganshire, Sir Rys ap Meredydd, repaired with a small body of his friends to Builth, but was refused admittance into the fortress, and the inhabitants to this day have borne the reproachful title of Bradwyn Bualt, or the traitors of Builth. It was winter time when Llewelyn accomplished this secret expedition. The prince found nearly the whole country in possession

of the English forces, commanded by Sir Edmund Mortimer. The snow now lay thick upon the ground; and in order to deceive his enemies, who were in vigilant pursuit of him, he employed a smith of the ominous name of Madoc goch min mawr—the read-haired, wide-mouthed Madoc,—to reverse his horse's shoes; but a party of the enemy coming up soon afterwards, the treacherous smith betrayed his prince's secret. Llewelyn passed the river at the bridge of Builth, and stationed his troop on the northern side, while he repaired to a neighbouring dingle, to attend an appointed meeting of his confederate lords. Here he remained alone and unarmed, waiting their arrival in vain. The bridge in the mean time was hotly assailed by the English forces, and as stoutly maintained by the brave Welsh, until a party was led by Sir Elias Walwyn over a ford of the river a little lower down, when its brave defenders, attacked in front and rear, were obliged to fly for their lives. The victorious troops surrounded the dingle, and the unfortunate prince, becoming sensible of his danger, and suspicious of treachery among his own professed friends, sought to make a secret retreat through the forest. Adam de Francton, an English knight, discovered and pursued the fugitive, and, perfectly unconscious of his rank, plunged a spear into his body, and instantly rode off to join his own army. The bleeding monarch, faint and almost expiring, had just life enough left to implore a priest (a monk of the Cistercian order) who chanced to be passing at that time, to bestow the last rites of Holy Church upon him, and shortly after, with his dying blessing upon his beloved Cymru, he expired. After





the *mêlée*, the knight returned to ascertain the quality of his enemy, and stripping him, discovered, to his unspeakable joy, that it was the Prince of Wales he had slain. He took from the pocket of his trousers his privy seal, and a letter in cipher, and cutting off his head, sent the whole as a most acceptable present to his ruthless enemy, Edward. Thus fell, defenceless, and abandoned by all, the prince that his enthusiastic bards were wont to address as "the dark eagle of the north," and the "chief of the golden-bordered shield:"

"In peace, fair Cambria's guiding star!
Her anchor in the storm of war."

The body of the prince, neglected and bloody, lay unburied for some time, though its interment was sought for by the Lady Matilda Longspee, and his friends; and this favour was only granted after it had been taken to the Abbey of Conway, and had received absolution from the Archbishop of Canterbury. The head of the unfortunate prince was paraded through the city of London, wreathed with laurel, and surmounted by a crown, in mockery of the double-sensed prophecy to which he had trusted, that "he should ride through Cheapside with a crown upon his head,"—and placed upon a pinnacle of the Tower. The scene of the prince's death is called Cwm Llewelyn, near the banks of the Irvon, a short distance to the westward of Builth, and the burial-place, Cefyn y bedd—the grave-ridge,—over which a house has been built.

At a short distance from Builth are the Park Wells, consisting of three mineral springs; saline, sulphureous, and chalybeate, each particularly strong. Pump-

rooms, in which balls are occasionally given, and other accommodations, are provided for visitors, who are often very numerous. The abundance of game among the neighbouring hills, the fine fish in the Wye and other rivers, together with the picturesque and highly salubrious situation of Builth, have induced many families to erect residences in the vicinity.

Continuing the Wye tour from this place, I crossed the little river Dihonw, a short distance from its junction with the Wye; after passing which, the high road runs parallel with, and close to, the river, through avenues of fine trees, among which are many noble old oaks, that,

"Stretching their gnarléd arms
Across the road, o'erarched it like a bower
With rich, dense foliage, while their ponderous trunks
Made on each side a noble colonnade,
Through which the sunny river and the sky
Gleamed in successive pictures."

The now wide and full-rolling stream of the Wye is here plentifully strewn with fragments of rock of all shapes and sizes, from the huge mass, like an overthrown tower rising high above the swelling water, to the groups of weed-grown stones that only serve to chafe the impetuous torrent into momentary foam and fury. Huge mountains on either side confine the valley of the river as we advance. Aberedw Hill rises on the left bank; and Allt Mawr, on the right, erects its stern precipitous front high and frowningly over the shadowed path. The lower portion of the hill-side is here and there decked with orchards, whose trees, laden with fruit, are backed by the grand oak woods which robe it higher up, from among which the

rocks peep out; and as they consist of horizontal blocks of compact slate or flag-stone, similar to those I described at Pont Herwid, and appear just on the high and commanding points of the eminence, they have the precise aspect of a grand, but ruined fortress. The same character is observable in the rocks on the opposite side of the river, near Aberedw, where the romantic and beautiful stream of the Edw, or Edwy, flows into the Wye. The situation of Aberedw is most lovely; its retired village, decayed castle, and simple church, all on the banks of two rivers renowned for their scenery, form subjects for the poet's dream, or the artist's study, inferior to few places on this famed track.

Aberedw Castle, though not so utterly razed as the others I have lately visited, has but a few dilapidated fragments remaining, and the plough has been carried into the very heart of these. The site of the castle is a scene of wondrous beauty; between, and closely overlooking, the junction of the rivers Wye and Edwy, it commands a lovely and diversified prospect on all sides. The space occupied by the buildings does not appear to have been extensive. Aberedw was a residence of the last Llewelyn, probably a hunting-seat; and not few or unthinking are the pilgrims who come to trace the spot where, for a few brief days, the gallant hero was wont to relax from the fatigues of his life-struggle for his country.

A calm radiant sunset shed its rich subdued light over the landscape, tinging the trees on the hill-sides, and pouring a dazzling glow of reflected clouds on the broad rolling river, which, hastening on along its

rocky channel, seemed to my fanciful eye a kind and eloquent companion, murmuring forth stories of her mountain home, and singing gladsome lays of Nature's majesty and love. So we journeyed together, the Wanderer and the Wye, only parting for the night at Erwood, where I remained. Let no other wanderer follow my example, for I can promise him no one item of that precious English sum-total, *comfort*, in the wayside hostel he will find there; but as I am no lover of grumbling, I shall avoid the recapitulation of my sorrows, and proceed on my next day's journey.

Opposite Erwood, on the north side of the Wye, is Garth Hill, a small eminence, on which remain the vestiges of an old British camp. Three miles from Erwood appears Llangoed Castle, as it is termed, though the plain, comfortable-looking mansion so named has nothing in its outward seeming consonant to its title. The adjacent grounds are richly wooded, and some of the trees remarkably fine. Boughrood Castle is another misnamed dwelling of the square sash-windowed kind; but part of the old castle and moat may yet be seen below the ford, from which, probably, the place derives its name. Near Boughrood is a singular horseshoe bend of the river, a curve of which runs by Llyswen, now a poor village, formerly, as its name (white palace) imports, a royal residence of the South Wales princes, and the scene of stately festivities in days of yore. At Glasbury the Wye is spanned by a rude, singular bridge, partly consisting of stone, and partly of wood, giving a very picturesque appearance to the village-like town; above which, on a lawny hill, stands Maeslough Castle. Verily, castles





SEAS.

abound here, and this is an imposing-looking edifice, adorned with turrets, towers, and terraces, surrounded by ornamental grounds, and so placed as to form a chief object in the landscape for several miles.

The town of Hay is pleasantly situated on the rising bank of the Wye, and, from the vestiges of a Roman camp near the church, appears to have been of ancient origin. The manor of Hay was given by Bernard Newmarch to Sir Philip Walwyn, who probably built the castle, of which little remains but a gateway, a dwelling-house having been erected out of the ruin's materials.

CHAPTER VI.

CLIFFORD CASTLE—WYE SCENERY TO HEREFORD—HEREFORD CATHEDRAL, ETC.—ACONBURY HILL.

O what a goodly scene!—here the bleak mount,
The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep;—
Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields;
And river, now with bushy rocks o'er-browed,
Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
And seats, and lawns, the abbey and the wood,
And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire;
————— God methought
Had built him here a temple! —————
No wish profaned my overwhelmed heart.
Blest hour! It was a luxury—to be!—COLBRIDGE.

THE little town of Hay is written down in the Norman records as *Le Hay*, and is now almost uniformly called The Hay. Its early history is involved in some obscurity; but Leland says, that "Roman coignes have bene ofte founde theare, wherby it is likelye to have bene somewhat of price in the dayes of the auncient Brytons." Its castle was destroyed by Henry II., with many others, during the time of the rebellion raised by his undutiful children, to chastise, as old Lambarde writes, "the insolencie of his sone, and such as egged him forwarde, bycause he founde that the opinion reposed on the strengthe of theise

castles had encouraged their maisters." It was afterwards restored, and came into the possession of Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford, and on several occasions changed masters, till it was finally destroyed by Owen Glyndwr.

The celebrated Fair Rosamond, daughter of Walter de Clifford, a baron of Herefordshire, was born in this castle. Her story is well known. Hollinshead, speaking of Henry II.'s incontinence, says, "But most of all he delited in the companie of a pleasant damosell whom he 'cleped the rose of the world; the common people named her Rosamond, for her passing beautie, propernesse of person, and pleasant wit, with other amiable qualities, being verily a rare and peerlesse peece in those days. He made for her an house at Woodstock, in Oxfordshire, like to a laberinth, that is to mean, wrought like a knot in a garden, called a maze, with such turnings and windings in and out, that no creature might find her, nor come to her, save he were instructed of the king, or such as were secret with him in that matter. But the common report of the people is, that the queene finally found hir out by a silke thread, which the king had drawne foorth of hir chamber with his foote, and dealte with hir in such sharpe and cruelle wise, that she lyved not long after. She was buried in the Nunrie of Godstow, beside Oxford, with these verses upon hir tumbe :—

" 'Hic jacet in tumbâ Rosa mundi, non Rosa munda,
Non redolet sed olet, quæ redolere solet.' " *

* Queen Eleanor might have been a little more compassionate to this frail "rose of the world," seeing that her own character was not imma-

The renowned George Clifford, third earl of Cumberland, and a great favourite with Queen Elizabeth, appears to have been one of the most "illustrious" members of the Clifford family. An anecdote related of his daughter, the Lady Anne, who was successively married to Richard earl of Dorset, and to Philip earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, deserves mention here. The countess seems to have bated nothing of the family spirit on the score of feminine gentleness. Sir Joseph Williamson, when secretary of state to Charles II., wrote to the countess, wishing to name a candidate to her for the borough of Appleby: he received the following reply:—

"I have been bullied by an usurper—I have been neglected by a court—but I will not be dictated to by a subject.—Your man shan't stand.

"ANNE DORSET, PEMBROKE AND MONTGOMERY."

Of this pithy and laconic letter-writer Dr. Donne remarked, that "in her younger years she knew well how to discourse of all things, from predestination to slea-silk;" and if the decision and terseness of her conversation equalled that of her writing, I, for one, could wish "Anne Dorset" alive again, that I might hear her talk—for a brief space.

Clifford Castle, from our description of which we have been beguiled by the thoughts of ladies fair, is seated on a high knoll, overlooking the Wye, and culminate; at least if we may believe her confession in the old ballad, beginning with—

"Queen Elianor was a sicke woman,
And afraid that she should dye;
Then she sente for two fryars of France,
To speke with her speedilye."

appears to have held a good and commanding position in times of danger. The ruins are draped with ivy, and surrounded by graceful trees ; the neighbouring country is also richly wooded.

I have advanced so gradually from the sterner features of the Wye banks amid rocks and cloud-capped mountains, that the change of character in the scenery, though impressed on my own mind, has not, perhaps, been made sufficiently evident to the kind listeners of my home travels ; they must bear in mind, if they please, that our queenly river has three distinct *phases*, if I may use the term. In her outset, sportive and frolicsome, gay as a maiden 'mid her native hills, she comes dancing and singing along, leaping merrily over the rocks that interrupt her course, and even when older grown, not forgetting her wild youthful antics. From Plinlimmon to Aberedw the scenery through which we follow her course is wild, rocky, picturesque, and sublime :—below Aberedw, the Wye grows somewhat more staid in her demeanour ; and the surrounding scenes become more rich and luxuriant than startling or grand—they are more English. She goes on in a calm, maidenly mood, “girt with beauty ;” and, until we pass Ross, no material change appears in the cultivated, rich, happy-looking valleys, whose bright fields laugh in the summer sunshine, nor fear its drought, while their noble river rolls her full tide along. Her third character commences at Goodrich, and from thence to her union with the Severn all is richly, harmoniously grand—one series of glorious pictures outspread on either side the majestic stream.

At Rhydspence, about a mile from Clifford, the Wye

quits the borders of Radnorshire, and turning eastward, enriches the county of Hereford, one of the garden-plots of our dear England. Small lovely villages are scattered along at intervals, with fine old gabled houses, wreathed with vines and roses from porch to roof-tree, mingled with jasmine clinging round

"The massive mullioned windows, and the stacks
Of quaint, fantastic chimneys, that o'ertop
The pointed roof with ever-varying store
Of twisted, carved, and lozenge-shaped device."

Hollyhocks, those high and graceful flowers, adorn the box-edged borders of the little crammed parterre before the windows, and, leaning over the crazy moss-grown palings in front, look abroad with a generous, frank, good-humoured glance for the passer-by, and a smile of kindly recognition to wonted guests.

Such gables and gardens the wanderer by the Wye-side from Hay to Hereford, will oftentimes pass, in his progress through Witney, Winforton, Willersley, Letton, Bradwardine, &c., interspersed with meadow scenes. Between Letton and Staunton-on-Wye is Brobury Scar, a cliff rising from the river's northern bank, and agreeably breaking the even, rich luxuriance of the scenery around. Moccas Court,* with its fair grounds and park-lands, lies on the southern bank; it was anciently called Moches, and was a part of the possessions of St. Guthlach, the holy father, we opine, the inventor of

* Moccas Park contains some of the finest oaks in the county of Hereford, and also a profusion of rich hawthorns. On the summit of the hill above the park, is the Druidical remain called Arthur's Stone. It is a cromlech, consisting of one long and wide stone resting on short columns.

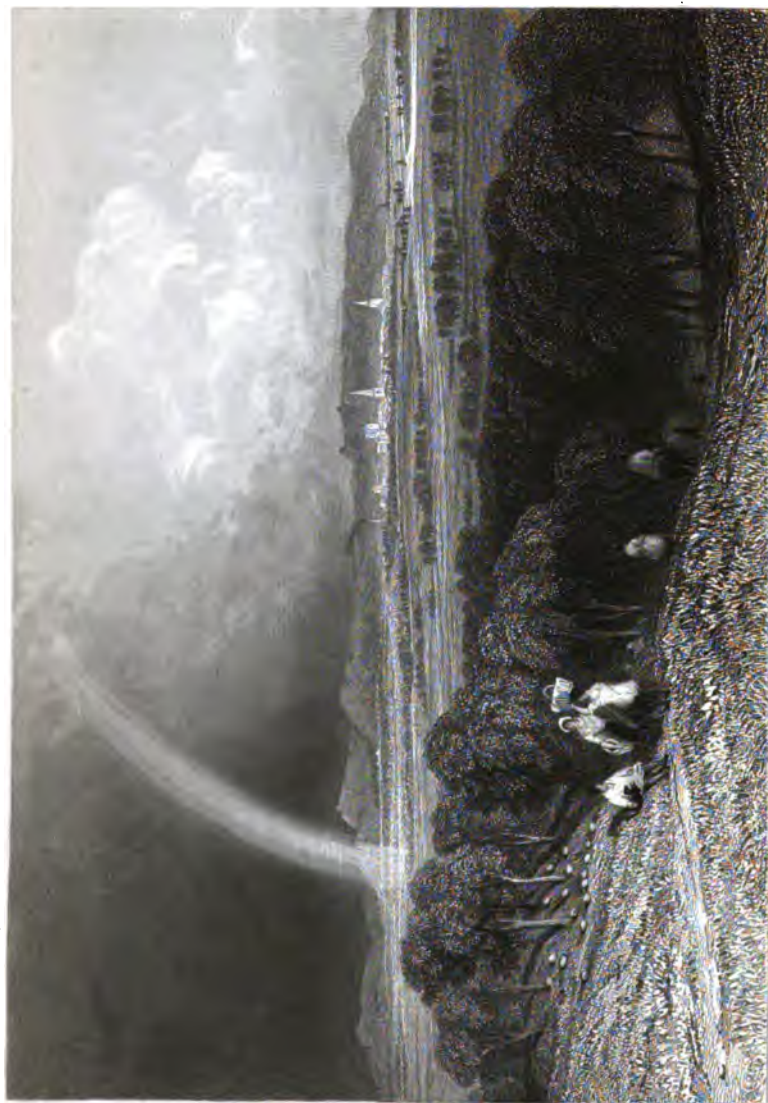
the whip so celebrated for the virtue of its flagellations. The old house stood below the site of the present, which is a modern structure, and was in part built from the ruins of Bradwardine Castle, now demolished, but in days of yore the family seat of Thomas Bradwardine, archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of Edward III., and for his deep learning named Doctor Profundus. From Moccas Park, crossing the brow of the intervening hill, we are tempted to descend into the far-famed Golden Vale, whose luxuriant vegetation, and gay, yellow vernal flowers well deserve such a fairy-tale name.

Journeying on, we come in sight of Kenchester, the supposed Ariconium of antiquity, said to have been destroyed by an earthquake. The Roman encampment of Magna Castra is immediately adjacent, and various remains telling of former occupants, consisting of Roman bricks, coins, &c., have been found on the spot. In 1669, a large paved vault, with some tables of plaster, were discovered in a wood not far distant, and the following year a bath was found, with the brick flues entire. A short distance south-east of Kenchester, is a spot called the Camp Field, and on the south bank of the river lies Eaton Camp: both these places have apparently been outposts to the chief station at Magna Castra.

Just before entering Hereford, at an angle of the road, is a stone cross, called the White Cross; its present height is not more than fifteen feet, the slender stages of the shaft having departed with bygone time. The remaining portion consists of an hexagonal flight of seven steps, and the first and only existing stage

of the shaft, which is also hexagonal, adorned with columns, and niches containing shields bearing a lion rampant. Tradition relates that this cross was erected about the year 1345, by Dr. Lewis Charlton, bishop of Hereford, in memory of the time when, in consequence of an infectious plague raging in the city, the markets were held on this spot.

The city of Hereford disappointed my expectations, as all cities and towns do, when I enter their pent-up streets from the pure, free, blessed country, "and therefore, little shall I grace the cause," though I do speak its praise. My kind and courteous readers!—You are listening to a Wanderer's story, and must e'en be content with descriptions of such things as suited my fancy to observe, bearing in mind, that I attempt not an inventory of all that *may* be seen, but only record what I myself *did* see. The morning after my arrival being wet and stormy, I visited the cathedral, and accompanied as I was, by an intelligent companion, whose love for the antiquities which surrounded us made him a right eloquent elucidator of their mystery and beauty, my wet morning proved a most pleasant one. The exterior of the cathedral, though made up by places of somewhat incongruous materials, is grand and impressive, sombre, aged, and darkly venerable; and as we gaze on its dusky features, they seem to tell a tale of days that are fled, and we are insensibly led into inquiry and recollection of its origin and existence. According to some ancient authorities, this city (formerly called by the Britons Trefawith, Hênwith, and Hên-fordd, from which names the Saxons may have formed its present name) possessed a magnificent



W. H. H. H.

THE WINDS OF THE WINDS,
from Dutch Hill



church as early as the reign of Offa, and was a flourishing place, and the seat of a bishop. Its prosperity continued under the West Saxon kings, and in or about the time of Athelstan, the town was encompassed by walls. Leland mentions six noble ports or gates in the place; but destruction, under the specious name of improvement, has demolished all these. Two, Widemarsh gate and another, existed till 1798. Harold founded the castle, of which nothing remains—the site forms a pleasant promenade, adorned with trees, on the bank of the Wye.

Return we to the cathedral, whose time-furrowed face sent Fancy to question the antiquity of its birth. We find that a grand church has existed here from a very early period; but we also find that repeated destructions of churches successively built on this spot have occurred, and that the existing edifice owes its origin to Robert de Loxing, or Lozinga, who, being made bishop of Hereford by William the Conqueror, commenced a church here in 1079, the former structure having been burned down in 1055. Lozinga died in 1095, but his design was completed by Bishop Raynelm, chancellor to the queen of Henry I., who held this see till his death, in 1115. The central tower was built about a century after, by Bishop Engidius de Bruce, and further alterations and additions have been constantly in progress, some good, some bad; among which latter must be classed those perpetrated in these “march-of-intellect” times by the enlightened persons concerned in such matters. In the first place, they have made the hoary old walls glare within “like a whited sepulchre,” wherever the greatest curse ever

bestowed by human invention on the artist and antiquary can be exhibited—all is *whitewashed*—the massive circular arches of the spacious nave are now, and even the beautiful oak carving in the choir was, coated with the abomination till recently. The altar part of the choir is strangely disfigured by being wainscoted in the Grecian style, and so making a Corinthian column stand side by side with a florid Gothic screen or pinnacle. The chapel of Our Lady, now used as the library, is a beautiful gem of architectural effect and symmetry. The group of lancet-windows, with their receding clusters of slender columns and rich carving, is, in good sooth, most pleasant to look upon; but the heavy book-shelves and desks in this place, with the precious tomes chained to their allotted nooks, and making an uncomfortable kind of jail-clatter and clang on being disturbed, give a jarring sensation to both eyes and ears. Bishop Audley's chapel, a sort of second-story offshoot to the library, and looking down into it, is an exquisite little *bijou* in decorative architecture, finely carved and painted, or rather illuminated, just like a rich old missal, and separated from the Lady chapel by a screen, carved and painted to correspond, and adorned with effigies of saints. Bishop Stanbury's chapel is, to my mind, even more beautiful, because less gaudy; but its fairy fretwork and pendent roof, all so very exquisite, are darkened by some ill-mannered contrivance of our days, and lost, except to the prying and admiring eyes of resolute hunters after the beautiful. The monument of old Cantilupe is in a dilapidated condition, like "many moe;" but some of these finger-posts to dead men's memories are wondrously

quaint and graceful, and fairly wrought; especially the canopied tomb of Bishop Acquablancia, a most beautiful specimen of the ornate, delicate elegance of the pointed style. Here, too, is the mutilated tomb of Sir Richard Pembruge, who died in 1375. He was ancestor of the Lords Chandos, and Knight of the Garter, in the time of Edward III. The right leg of this knight's stone effigy having been demolished or carried off, an artificer was employed to replace it, whose knowledge of knightly costume not being equal to his accuracy in copying what he saw of it, he has invested the new limb with a fac-simile garter, to match the honourable badge which graces the sinister leg. This effigy is interesting from wearing the old tournament helmet, so much prized by antiquarians and collectors of armour. Numberless other monumental reliques crowd on my memory while mentioning the few I have done, but I must resist the temptation of introducing them to my readers: not even the devotional ladies so demurely kneeling on their marble cushions—not the mitred abbots, and bishops without number, may be added to my chronicle. But the famous old map of the world, I *cannot* pass in silence. How our modern masters of the theodolite must hug themselves while contemplating this rich bit of serious burlesque! The map is done on very thick parchment, and is, perhaps, four or five feet square, the geographical portion being circular, and the corners occupied by emblematical devices and figures; in one part is a grotesque representation of his Holiness the Pope, commissioning surveyors to make this marvellous chart, which represents the Archipelago in the immediate

vicinity of London, with Paris, Rome, Constantinople, &c., all contiguous. This curiosity is attributed to the time of King John, and is tolerably well preserved, most of the names and figures being distinctly visible, and some of the illuminated parts quite brilliant. It is curious to notice how little progress the science of geography made in the early ages. Our neighbours of the Low Countries tried their hands upon a map of Scotland, more than three centuries after the date of this Hereford map, which they somewhat pompously announced as "expurgated from all faults," in which Scotland is put down as an island, and York one of its chief cities.

Great neglect appears in almost every part of Hereford Cathedral, and where repairs or restorations *are* attempted, the very spirit of discord seems to prevail with the directors; they crown Saxon pillars with Gothic arches, stop up light and elegant arcades by cumbrous, dark, dead walls; shuffle monuments out of their places; hide the grandest architectural beauty, and the most curious work of ancient art, by bran-new painted pews, and pert-looking epitaph-slabs; destroy whole chapels to save the cost of repairing them (Bishop Egerton to wit), and bestow their malediction of whitewash on all things it can spoil.

One dainty morsel of monastic architecture was brought under my observation by the same kind and intelligent companion, to whom I owe much of my enjoyment in the cathedral antiquities. I allude to the ruin of the Pulpit-cross, now standing in a cabbage-and-potato garden, which occupies part of the site of the ancient monastery of Black Fryars. The cross is hex-

agonal in form, surrounded by steps, ascending to a covered stand or pulpit, in the centre of which is an ornamented pedestal of like form, from which springs the shaft of the cross, spreading in ramifications on the inner part of the roof, and rising from the point above, where it is broken off; buttresses support each angle of this beautiful remnant; and ivy, with other creeping plants, adorn while they aid in destroying it. The few remaining portions of the monastery, now used as stabling, &c., form a suitable background to the cross, which is a perfect bit of beauty.

The following morning proved little more favourable for out-door exploits; I nevertheless resolved to perform my self-assigned task of a visit to Dinedor Hill: the very name has enchantment in it,—it sounds like something beautiful. Another “kind and intelligent companion” charitably bestowed his society on the Wanderer, and forth we started, having in the mean time determined on ascending Aconbury Hill instead of Dinedor—the former commanding all the view seen from the latter, and much more; and also possessing the merit—great in the eyes of a small antiquary—of having a well-defined Roman camp on its summit. We passed out of town over the bridge, where the Wye looks placid and smooth,—the beautiful romping hoiden of Plinlimmon tamed down into a quiet *douce damoiselle*.

The meadow scenery around was very lovely, and full of fine groups of Cuybish-looking cows, standing just as a painter would have them, and as if conscious how well they looked in the bright green fields. The orchards were all beautiful enough to be the gardens of the Hesperides, with trees bending under their trea-

tures of golden, russet, and ruddy fruit, hanging in luscious clustering wreaths, or heaped in juicy hillocks ready for cider-making. After passing the little village of Callow, and gaining the ascent beyond, the view opens grandly, and you push on eagerly anticipating the treat to come. A narrow footpath leads from the high road, through the wood to the Camp Hill; and a lovely path it is! full of hazel bushes, and ferns, and flowers. On reaching the summit of the hill, the intrenchment is seen extending in an irregular oblong oval, with the elevated prætorium, and chief divisions of the camp, clearly marked, though now covered with low underwood. Soon after our arrival on the spot whence the view was to be enjoyed, a "fine growing shower" came on, and, increasing rapidly in vehemence, it "downward poured a deluge of disaster." I went, as a proper traveller should, "to see whatever could be seen," and so resolved "to bide the pelting of the pitiless storm," in full expectation that it would shortly pass over; so on the hill we remained, without shelter of any kind, or any semblance of a tree, save a few bushes, and some famous blackberry brambles, which, though they offered their best of meat and drink, had a marvellous "lack of dry lodgings for travellers." Despite the storm, which continued unabated, I, for my own part, positively enjoyed myself; for the rain, heavy as it was over our heads, did not appear to be equally violent all around, and wore the semblance of a living silvery veil, occasionally lighted up by a burst of watery sunshine, which, resting on the white cottages sprinkled about, and on the city of Hereford, lying below us at a few miles' distance, made them gleam

brightly out by turns; and at every shift of the changing clouds, a new picture burst into life and beauty. Hereford lay to the north (look at the view from Dinedor, with the rainbow, and imagine such a scene realized); beyond, to the west, the Wye Valley, towards Hay, and the hills of Radnorshire; still west, but more southerly, than these, appeared those ever-grand landscape guests, the Skyrrid, Sugarloaf, and Black Mountains: eastward the Malvern Hills, and the ridges about Stoke Edith. The dark clouds overhead cast a black shadow on the near hills, while bright sunshine lit up river, spire, town, and tower, in the green vales beyond; and the distant mountains, frowning in grandeur, wore their storm-robcs of dusky purple, veiled in ever-changing silvery mist, now light and airy—anon thick and dense,—now smoke, now substance,—a dreamy curtain between us and the glory of the distant scenes. They who could stand on such a spot as this, and gaze around unmoved, must have a marvellously small allowance of heart and soul in their composition.

CHAPTER VII.

HAREWOOD—ROSS—GOODRICH COURT—GOODRICH CASTLE.

Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Nor in proud falls magnificently lost;
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain,
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.
Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heav'n-directed spire to rise?
The MAN OF ROSS, each lisping babe replies.—POPE.

THE Wye scenery, between Hereford and Ross, though rich and luxuriant, presents so little of novelty or historic interest, that I preferred taking the more direct land road, which passed through a country of garden-like beauty and cultivation, sprinkled with lovely cheerful villages and park land, and bounded in the distance by the glorious ranges of blue mountains I have before alluded to. Beyond Aconbury Hill, the road gradually descends, and passes through the village of Much Birch, where a very droll old-fashioned garden amused me exceedingly, with its infinite variety of devices in cut and clipped yew-trees.

Lovely prospects opened in all directions, and the hedge-rows were gaily and beautifully adorned with the





deep ruddy berries of the hawthorn, and the shining acorns gleaming among the rich yellow leaves of the fine old oaks, which were particularly grand about Harewood, the seat of the Hoskins family, a spot interesting as having formed part of the ancient Forest of Harewood, in which Ethelwold, King Edgar's minister, had a castle. Here, it is said, Mason fixed the scene for his fine drama of *Elfrida*, and his description is characteristic of many similar scenes in this luxuriant neighbourhood.

"How nobly does this venerable wood,
Gilt with the glories of the orient sun,
Embosom yon fair mansion! the soft air
Salutes me with most cool and temperate breath,
And, as I tread the flower-besprinkled lawn,
Sends up a gale of fragrance. I should guess,
If e'er Content deigned visit mortal clime,
This was her place of dearest residence."

Pengethly next appears, exhibiting the same features of charming home scenery, and abundance of beautiful cattle, the greater part of this district consisting of rich pasture land. We next passed the village of Peterstow, and then entered Wilton, where the Wye is spanned by a handsome bridge, from which a broad terrace-like road leads into Ross, only a mile distant. This new road has been recently cut beneath the red cliffs, on the summit of which, the church and its surrounding elm-trees form a conspicuous object in the landscape for some miles round.

Our first thoughts, on entering the town of Ross, naturally recur to the memory of John Kyrle, the philanthropist of the place. The house in which the

good man lived was lately used as an inn, but is now a private dwelling. Here the poet Coleridge wrote the following lines :—

“Richer than miser o’er his countless boards,
Nobler than kings, or king-polluted lords,
Here dwelt the Man of Ross! O traveller, hear!
Departed merit claims a reverent tear.
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he viewed his modest wealth;
He heard the widow’s heav’n-breathed prayer of praise;
He marked the sheltered orphan’s tearful gaze.
Or, where the sorrow-shrivelled captive lay,
Poured the bright blaze of Freedom’s noontide ray.
But if, like me, through life’s distressful scene,
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been,
And if, thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward, tempest-tossed in thought,
Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And dream of goodness thou hast never felt.”*

The church which the good man of Ross frequented, and where he lies interred, is a handsome and venerable-looking structure, with a lofty spire. The churchyard is extensive, and adorned by some particularly fine elm-trees, planted by his own hands. I never remember having been so much pleased with a church and burial-ground as with this; the gray Gothic architecture, the ancient tombs, and the heaved turf, where so many nameless dead are laid at rest,—the grand trees, rustling in the wind above, and the glorious pro-

* John Kyrle was born at Dymock, in Herefordshire, in 1637, and died in 1724. He is described as nearly six feet high, “strong and lusty made, jolly and ruddy in the face, with a large nose.” His dress was a dark-brown suit, a wig, short cut and bushy behind, parted in the forehead, with a cravat, the long ends of which hung down after the fashion of Charles the Second’s time.

spect spread out all around,—it was the very poetry of earth—its beauty and its sadness.

There is a fanciful, and, as it seems, true story related of these elm-trees. It is said that after the death of their benevolent planter, an official and officious person committed the cruel sacrilege of cutting down some of the good man's favourite trees;* immediately upon which, there sprung up within the church, and within the very pew he occupied, three young elm shoots, which, with almost superstitious reverence, are now preserved and cherished. They overshadow the two tall windows in that corner of the church, and form a verdant canopy over the wonted seat of the good man. It is one of the most strange and beautiful whims of Nature I ever knew. The marble bust and monument in the chancel, tinged with the passing sunlight through gorgeous stained glass, had nothing of interest for me compared with this simple, but touching memento. The "Man of Ross's Walk" is at some distance from the churchyard, and is approached by a neat gravel path across the fields. It occupies a rocky eminence parallel with the course of the Wye, and is shaded by luxuriant beech, aspen, and other trees. At the extremity of the walk is placed a summer-house which was once a favourite resort of the inhabitants, but it now appears in a deserted and somewhat desolate condition. Adjoining the churchyard is "The Prospect," which commands, as from a promontory, the course of the winding Wye and the exquisite scenery around.

* There are yet standing fourteen of these magnificent elms, many of which measure nearly twelve feet round the trunk, and in height rival the pinnacles of the church tower.

The grounds have been tastefully laid out and planted by the proprietor of the new Royal Hotel, a beautiful building in the Tudor style of architecture, which rises gracefully from the declivity on the right. A dispute arose about the possession of this delectable spot, which the proprietor claimed as private property, but he has yielded to the spirited opposition of the townspeople, and it constitutes still the favourite promenade.

Ross is a pleasant little town; its varied site and chalky streets give it a clean, picturesque, and cheery appearance. The house occupied by the "good man" is on one side of the old weather-beaten town-hall, and is now converted into a druggist's shop, over which is affixed, as the country people called it, the "statute" of Mr. Kyrle.

From Ross I made an excursion to May Hill, another spot considered by antiquaries as the probable site of the ancient Ariconium of Antoninus, which Camden fixes at Kenchester, but which Horseley removes to the neighbourhood of Ross. It has evidently been an important Roman station, and commands a view of an immense extent of country, though the extraordinary flatness and breadth of its summit hides the middle landscape, and only allows the spectator to enjoy the distance, and the immediate foreground of gorse, heather, and the crowning crest of fir-trees, which are visible for many miles round. The Severn, and the great plain of Gloucester, form the most interesting portion of the panorama, at the extremity of which, faintly distinguished from the Cotteswold Hills, rise the spires and towers of that city; and the Malvern Hills on the north-east, wear a more broken and picturesque

form than from any other spot whence I have viewed them.

A pleasant evening walk from "mine inn," below the red cliffs at Ross, and over the Wye bridge, brought me to the small hamlet of Wilton, and I wandered about, seeking a road to the ruins of its old castle, parts of which are seen from the river and bridge. Taking advantage of a stranger's privilege, I accosted a gentleman, whose benevolent countenance augured well for my intended queries, and "asked my way" to the castle, whither he kindly accompanied me. He led me into a private garden, where stands the ruin, consisting of scarcely more than the low square wall that surrounds it, and a turret, that has been converted into a thatched summer-house. On the site of the jealous fortress has sprung up a *cottage ornée*, smiling significantly, with all the modern appliances "thereto belonging." The area of the castle serves as garden ground, and flaunting dahlias flourish luxuriantly among the strangely-abused memories of former days. I could be Quixotic in defence of the rights of poor old Wilton Castle—not that I am a lover of anything of feudal tyranny, darkness, and oppression of soul and body—that iron vassalage of by-gone days,—God forbid! but I hate to see anything abused in its adversity; and ruins are beautiful bits of poetry and morality,—they father many a delicate fancy, and tell, eloquently silent, many a stern truth. They do not occupy much of our land-room, and surely ought to be allowed that little ungrudgingly, without being either pulled down or filled up like the one in question. Wilton Castle was the seat of the Greys from the time of Edward I. It was afterwards

alienated to the Chandos family, and finally it became the property of Guy's Hospital. The name of this family, in connection with their own worth, will long be remembered in the person of one of their descendants, as the patron of the illustrious poet Spenser, for whom he procured a grant from Queen Elizabeth of three thousand acres of land in the county of Cork, while he was Lord Deputy of Ireland, and Spenser enjoyed the office of his secretary. The poet has perpetuated his gratitude in the sonnet to Lord Grey prefixed to his *Fairy Queen*.

"Most noble lord, the pillar of my life,
And patron of my Muse's pupilage ;
Through whose large bounty poured on me rife,
In the first season of my feeble age,
I now do live, bound yours by vassalage."

Returning to Ross by twilight, I ended my day's wanderings; and on the following morning rose with the intention of spending some hours at Goodrich, but the rain poured down in torrents, and philosophy was at zero. At length, by mid-day, a gleam appeared, and I gladly proceeded to Goodrich Court. I may well apply to this mansion the term used regarding Abbotsford; this is, indeed, "a romance in stone and lime." But the characters of the romances are different. In Abbotsford is united the castle and the monastery, with something of the fanciful, fairy spirit of Border legends. At Goodrich Court we dream of Froissart and his chronicles of arms and chivalry. Sir S. R. Meyrick formed the design from a variety of sources, which furnished detached portions and different architectural details of the period between the first and third Edwards, the



Fig. 1. Rain, Steam, and Great Railway Bridge, by J.M.W. Turner.



prevailing style of which he has successfully copied, arranging and disposing the whole so as to combine characteristic features from actual buildings, in an edifice of unique design, and almost perfect harmony, and admirably calculated for the reception and display of the magnificent collection of ancient armour in the possession of its accomplished resident. The extreme beauty of the spot on which the Court is erected, being "the summit of a bold promontory, with a rich hanging wood beneath, reaching to the water's edge, and backed by copped and other hills, offers a most attractive subject for the pencil." The splendid plate, which will, far better than any written description, convey an idea of the reality to my readers, also includes a view of the adjoining eminence, on which stand the hoary and shattered, but beautiful ruins of the old castle of Goodrich.

Goodrich Court, in its architectural character, far surpasses any of those modern fortress-mansions, which the taste of the present day has erected in imitation of by-gone times; and where, indeed, any incongruity can be observed, it has respect only to its appendages, and may be referred to the difference of national condition in the past and present age,—a state of permanent peace from one of cruel and desolating war: such a scene is not without its use and pleasure too, to those who are given to reflection. The perfect picture of a feudal fortress standing up in its prowess and strength, such as it appeared amidst the grim terrors of a barbarous age, with all the graceful assurances of peace and plenty scattered profusely around, is a beautiful and thought-creating object. Driving along the smoothly-

gravelled Wardour's Terrace, the visitor arrives at the principal gateway, which is approached over a draw-bridge, furnished with a portcullis, and flanked by two round towers. The surrounding battlements, turrets, loopholes, and machicolations, look bristlingly on the defensive; while the small dry moat, laid with velvet turf, and the fair flower-beds, judiciously separated by what may be regarded as a modified rampart, perfuming the quiet air around, seem to give a most pleasant intimation of the "palmy days" into which we of the nineteenth century have fallen. On the left of the entrance is Sussex Tower, the lofty bartizans and spires of which are visible from many distant points, also the keep and eastern towers. The building consists of two courts, the inner and outer, separated from each other by the Grand Armoury. The north-west front, which is moated, contains the offices, above which are the warder's chamber, used as a butler's pantry, the kitchen, and housekeeper's room; and in a line on the north-east, the drawing-room, which is in Sussex Tower, the breakfast-room, dining-room, library, entrance-hall, and the ante-room to the Asiatic armoury,—the Asiatic armoury itself being in the Eastern Tower. Parallel to this are the Hastilude Chamber, Grand Armoury, and Chapel, and parallel to the north-west front are the South Sea Room and Banqueting Hall. A proper description of the extensive and unrivalled collection of armour and antiquities can only be found in the able works of the learned proprietor, but I shall briefly enumerate a few of the objects which chiefly attracted my attention.

On the door is the splendid bronze knocker and key-

hole escutcheon, beautifully designed by Giovanni di Bologna, the former representing the destruction of the Philistines by Samson. The ENTRANCE HALL is ornamented with stags' horns of various kinds, ancient weapons and hunting-arms tastefully grouped; and the fireplace, of Painswick stone, is from a beautiful design by Mr. Blore. The apartment is divided by an archway, and at the first landing of the staircase, which leads to the principal bed-chambers, is the oriel window, superbly fitted up with painted glass, representing the figure of Meuric or Meyrick ab Llewelyn of Bodorgan, in the island of Anglesey, esquire of the body to King Henry VII., with the family arms, crest, and motto. The beautiful antique lamp of bronze, which lights the staircase, is of Greek art, was dug out of the ruins of Herculaneum, and is probably two thousand years old. From this hall a sallyport with drawbridge leads to the Ladies' Terrace, from which another bridge crosses the moat to some steps that form an agreeable descent to the flower garden, and thence through a hanging wood to the river. To the left of the entrance hall is HENRY VI.'s GALLERY, leading to the library, which is fitted up after the fashion adopted in the reign of Henry VIII. The beautiful carved oak ceiling and frieze in this room were formerly in the Government-house at Breda, in Holland. On the table, which is of the time of Henry VIII., are caskets, inkstands, candlesticks, &c., of the same period, and over the mantlepiece the astrolabe of that monarch, with his armorial bearings and motto engraved thereon. In one of the drawers are two exquisite gems by Holbein, of the king, and Ann of Cleves. The DINING ROOM in its external architecture is of Edward II.'s time. The

ceiling is formed of cross beams held by open spandrels and supported on foliated corbels of Painswick stone. The chimney-piece greatly resembles those in Goodrich Castle. This room contains a valuable collection of paintings, most of which are landscapes and sea-pieces, by excellent Dutch and English artists, and which have been in Sir Samuel's family for many years. The BREAKFAST ROOM carries the visitor many centuries forward, and places him amidst the gorgeous furniture and flowing patterns of the days of Queen Anne, of which the panels on the walls, the window curtains and hangings of the recess, the gilt pier-table, the stand in the centre of the room, the looking-glasses, Seve and Dresden porcelain, and the splendid clock, are originals of that age. The DRAWING ROOM returns to the time of the Plantagenets. It is octagonal, and groined in the ceiling, with gilt bosses. The oak table in the centre is from the only remaining example of the kind, which is preserved in the Chapter-house at Salisbury, and the fireplace from that beautiful specimen of the close of Edward II.'s reign, Prior Crawden's, at Ely. On the table are a pair of candlesticks of copper enamelled, seven hundred years old, and an inkstand formed of various pieces of similar work of the same age, with four very curious dishes, and some interesting ivory caskets. On the recesses in the walls are the following paintings, by Mr. John Coke Smith : —the legend of St. George and the Dragon ; the romance of Sir Tristrem ; the tale of the Comtesse de Vergi ; and that of the Tournament of the White Garment.

On the right of the entrance hall is the ante-room to the ASIATIC ARMOURY, the cornice and dado of which



THE RIVER AND THE HILLS



are taken from the Alhambra. The spectator now stands amongst forms bearing the proportions and attitudes of real life, the first of which is the mounted figure of a Luti Pindarrie on his Arabian steed, from a drawing by Captain Grindley, who brought the chain armour and horse-trapping (all the head gear being of solid silver) to this country. Two glass cases contain a variety of arms and armour from different parts of Asia. In this apartment too is an elaborate and beautiful Persian chess-board of ebony, ivory, and metal inlaid. A triple-headed arch in the Eastern style opens to the Asiatic Armoury, in which is seen an oriental rajah wearing a coat of plate, before whom kneels a horse soldier from Delhi, in his long coat of chain armour. On each side are figures on horseback, and others standing, which exhibit varieties of Indian and Persian armour. A glazed recess is appropriated in a similar manner to those in the ante-room, and various weapons decorate the walls. A valuable series of Hindoo deities and several rare Chinese curiosities are arranged in two glass cases, one on each side the window. The next in order is the SOUTH SEA ROOM, which is filled with the rude weapons, feathered cloaks, &c., of the Pacific Ocean. The visitor quits this apartment for another portion of HENRY VI.'s GALLERY, the whole length of which is 106 feet. In the window is an admirable specimen of German painted glass, representing St. George in fluted armour, with the date 1517. On the right hand is a niche, in which stands a figure accoutred in, probably, the most magnificent suit in existence. This armour was made for the duke of Ferrara, to whom Tasso addressed his "Jerusalem Delivered," and is beautifully embossed with bas-reliefs and inlaid

with gold. In 1814 it was destined to adorn Bonaparte's imperial retreat of Malmaison, having been actually packed in satin and put into a case for the purpose of being forwarded to him. Before, however, it was despatched, the emperor had ceased to reign, and the armour remained at Modena, until it was purchased for Sir Samuel Meyrick.

Ample folding doors opposite this suit open to the BANQUETING HALL, which is fifty feet in length. Over the entrance is the Minstrel's Gallery. On the raised floor at the upper end stands a billiard-table, on the south-east side of which is an oriel window, commanding a view of Goodrich Castle, the river Wye, and the picturesque valley of the Lea Bailey. Near this window folding doors open to a covered way that leads to the harness-room and stables. The high pitched roof, with its pointed arches of oak, resting on corbels of stone, the oak floor, panelling, &c., and the chimney-piece most elaborately carved in Painswick stone, cannot fail to attract the attention of the visitor. The equestrian alto-relievo of Aylmer de Valence, who owned the castle and the land on which Goodrich Court is built, in the time of Edward II., introduced in a trefoil in the pediment, is improved from that on his monument in Westminster Abbey. The escutcheons of painted glass in the windows represent his armorial bearings, and those of the preceding owners of Goodrich Castle and its demesnes. The walls are embellished with portraits by foreign and English artists, and the niches by casts of Edward II. and his mother.

The doors on the right of the billiard-table lead to the HASTILUDE CHAMBER, in which is the tournament armour, so arranged as to give the complete represen-

tation of a joust, with the lists, royal box, and heralds. It at the same time exhibits all the varieties of "hast-ing-harness," or tournament armour, from the time of Henry VI. to that of Queen Elizabeth inclusive. The next object of attraction is the GRAND ARMOURY, eighty-six feet in length, with its oaken roof, floor, and gallery on three of its sides. In this gallery are ten glass cases to contain the more curious and rare specimens of armour, the contents of two of which,—viz., the ancient British arms and the consecutive series of guns, from the first invention to the firelock, are absolutely unique, while the Greek and Roman armour cannot fail to be highly interesting.* Above these glass cases are the emblazoned banners of Edward II., his son, Roger de Chandos, Gilbert de Turbeville, Roger li Strange, Johan de Lacy, Morice de Barkly, Roger de Mortymer, Roger de Baskerville, Rychart de Talbote, Edmond de Boun and Henri de Penbrugge, according to an ancient roll of arms of the period; and which have been selected from these knights, holding lands in the county of Hereford. In the intervening spaces eighty-four halberds, from their earliest to their latest form, appear in groups. The oaken columns which support the gallery are surrounded by weapons of all other known kinds, and between them, and also in niches, are placed ten suits on horseback, and several on foot, from the time of Edward III. to that of James

* Every variety of the armour in this house, drawn by Sir S. Meyrick, according to scale, accompanied by explanations, with views of the Entrance Hall, Asiatic Armoury, Hastilude Chamber, and Grand Armoury, has been engraved by Mr. Skelton, in his "Illustrations of Arms and Armour," from the collections at Goodrich Court.

II., being the most comprehensive and instructive collection of the kind in the world.

In this assemblage of curiosities a group of five figures represents King Charles I. in an original buff jacket and gorget, with his armour on the floor of a tent, and his crown and helmet on the table, attended by his standard-bearer, an officer of cuirassiers, giving direction to one of two pikemen, who, as well as their commander, appear in black corslets, and afford examples of the large collars and gofered falling ruffs. The face and hand of King Charles, which rests on a rapier, were painted by H. P. Briggs, R.A., and are exquisitely executed, especially the hand, which is a perfect marvel. At the other end of the Armoury, under the archway, are two beautifully engraved half-suits from Florence, of the time of Queen Elizabeth, a handsome engraved manefare from Italy, and a most curious and interesting German saddle of the early part of the reign of Henry VI., on which is a minnesinger's love sonnet.

The gallery of the Armoury opens to the DOUCEAN* MUSEUM; a most splendid and valuable collection of works of art, antiquities, and scientific objects, bequeathed to Sir Samuel Meyrick by that eminent antiquary the late Francis Douce, Esq.

A passage from this armoury leads to the ANTE-

* An ample catalogue has been printed of the contents, in the "Gentleman's Magazine," under the heads of paintings, tapestry, drawings, engravings, carvings in wood, carvings in ivory, enamels, cinque-cento bronzes, coins and medals, casts, miscellaneous antiquities, Egyptian antiquities, Greek antiquities, Roman antiquities, Mexican antiquities, Persian antiquities and curiosities, Indian antiquities and curiosities, and Chinese antiquities and curiosities.

CHAPEL, in which are two Welsh monumental inscriptions of the sixth century. Three steps ascend to the chapel, which is entered through either of two arches contained within a large one, with beautiful mouldings and enriched with figures. This is fitted up in the Roman Catholic manner, with altar-piece, confessional, font, and eagle desk. In the upper part of the altar-piece are four female saints, carved in oak, in the very best style of art, which are of the time of Edward IV., and other figures of the same period surmount the terminating finials of the whole. In the lower part are carvings in alabaster of the times of Edward II., Edward III., and Henry VI. The altar itself is covered with a crimson velvet cloth, on which is worked a large Maltese gold cross; and upon it are six large candlesticks and various ancient ornaments. Under their respective helmets are two banners and a guidon, properly emblazoned.

I must confess that to me a silent and motionless effigy, clothed in the suit of armour actually worn by some hero of ancient days, is a strange and solemn thing, at least a creator of solemn and not unprofitable thoughts, gazing, as I do, on the garb of one whose life was past, and perhaps lost, in mortal struggles with his brother man; whose firm-set limbs and iron sinews seemed to defy time and death; who once followed with living eagerness the waving banner that led to national honour, or, not unfrequently, to the deadly strife of private and personal quarrel:—

“But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now.”

It is not only the historical, but the moral and poetical associations which accompany these memories of the olden time, that give to such a rich and elaborate exhibition as this at Goodrich Court, a value and importance beyond the mere gratification of literary and antiquarian taste; they make it the text-book from which both the mind and the heart draw lessons of instruction and deep interest. They serve to stimulate and feed what Serjeant Talford denominates "that highest of all human faculties, the great mediatory and interfusing power of imagination," which combines and blends the past and the present in one rich and harmonious picture. This is truly "the chamber of imagery!" The collection which Sir Samuel Meyrick has already made here, though exceedingly rare, precious, and more comprehensive than any other, must not be considered complete, and, indeed, I have reason to know, is not so deemed by the worthy knight, but rather as one in progress, which the erudite and indefatigable collector intends, by additions, to make valuable as a critical standard on the subject.*

I have been tempted to stay longer at this extraordinary place, and to give a more particular description of the marvellous things it contains, than usually comports with the method of my wanderings; but certainly not more than the importance of the objects seemed to require, from their intimate connection with the annals of human life and action. The rudiments of history truly are to be found in the principles and passions of mankind; but the changes which these have wrought

* This collection, I have understood, has been valued at the sum of £30,000.

in the condition of nations, and in the order of the human mind, are symbolized to us most distinctly by those external signs which belong to their various stages of advance or resiliency. Of these signs, probably none are so expressive as the fashions of peace, or the accoutrements of war. Even attributive words, in allusion to natural qualities and accidental associations, so common amongst the Welsh and English, and, indeed, most other nations, and the *soubriquets* of monarchs and other remarkable persons, belong to this species of popular signs, and are indicative of the manners of their own times, and of distant eras in history. The English reader will be immediately sensible of this association when, in his researches, he meets with the terms *Court-mantel* and *Cœur de Lion*,—and the ages of Henry II., with the Angevin fashions and piebald dresses, the very dandyism of our ancestors, which characterized the one, and the military ardour and daring valour of the crusading age, which belongs to the other, will rise visibly before him.

Of all the changes to which European society has been subjected, that of the institution of Chivalry has proved the most productive of important results, whether considered in its immediate tendency or its remote effects. I refer not to that stage of its history in which the investiture with the toga, or with arms, existed from the time of Tacitus to the termination of the Saxon period, which merely marked the attainment of a state of manhood by the candidate; but most especially to that era when knighthood became a specific dignity, claiming peculiar objects, and subjecting its members to a course of rigorous discipline; combining

them together into fellowships, and binding them by rules from which they could not depart without loss of fame or life. The institution of Chivalry sprang up in the year 1025, when public licentiousness was at its height, originating with the clergy, and comprehending the nobility of Europe, from the age of twelve years. Its first rules were confirmed at the Council of Bourges, and amplified at that of Clermont. The oath, by which its members were bound together, was the following:—
“To defend the Christian religion; faithfully to practise the morals of it; to defend widows, orphans, and the weaker sex; not to make war on account of goods and effects, but to let such disputes be decided judicially; and to keep the truces of God.” *

Such an institution, from the animating spirit it infused into its members, necessarily made way for degrees of merit, arising from the performance of heroic deeds, and these to correspondent distinctions. The inventive genius of man contrived to render these distinctions permanent and hereditary by representative figures, emblematical devices, and mottoes, conveying by these signs images, as it were, of real events, and words significant of certain actions or characteristic sentiments. From hence arose the science of heraldry, with all its *materiel* of “armories,” banners, and gorgeous dresses, displaying ensigns which related to rank, tenure, contracts, deeds of arms, civil feuds, or national wars. Heraldry became also a painted language, furnished with an artistical phraseology of “tinctures,”

* These were the Church's feasts and their eves, and the space of time between Wednesday evening and Monday morning. This rule was enforced under the penalty of death, or of abandoning Christendom.

gules, azure, sinople, and sable, and their representative lines, points, chequers, stripes, crosses, and figures, and these again indented, ingrained, invecked, waved, nebuled, or embattled; with the family relationships designated by label, crescent, star, martlet, ring, and fleur-de-lis, extending from the eldest to the youngest son, in their order of seniority, till it finally developed itself in an established and well-understood series of hieroglyphics—the alphabet of the heroic age of Christendom,—which may be read and interpreted even now by the learned antiquary, as he passes through the halls in which, it will appear, I have lingered so long and satisfactorily, suggestive of the most pregnant events, and deeply inscribed with moral and economic reflections.

Of the use of this science, it may be proper to make one observation. The very constitution of man leads him to aim at eminence, and the various qualities which he possesses fit him for it. Heraldry, therefore, in its organic character, is but the invention of a series of symbols, formed on purpose to designate these inevitable distinctions, and to allure forward to their attainment. The art of war has given place to the arts of peace; and this science, with the peculiar pliancy of which it is susceptible, has become subservient to the best purposes of society, and an active stimulus to merit in all the forms that can adorn or benefit the human race.

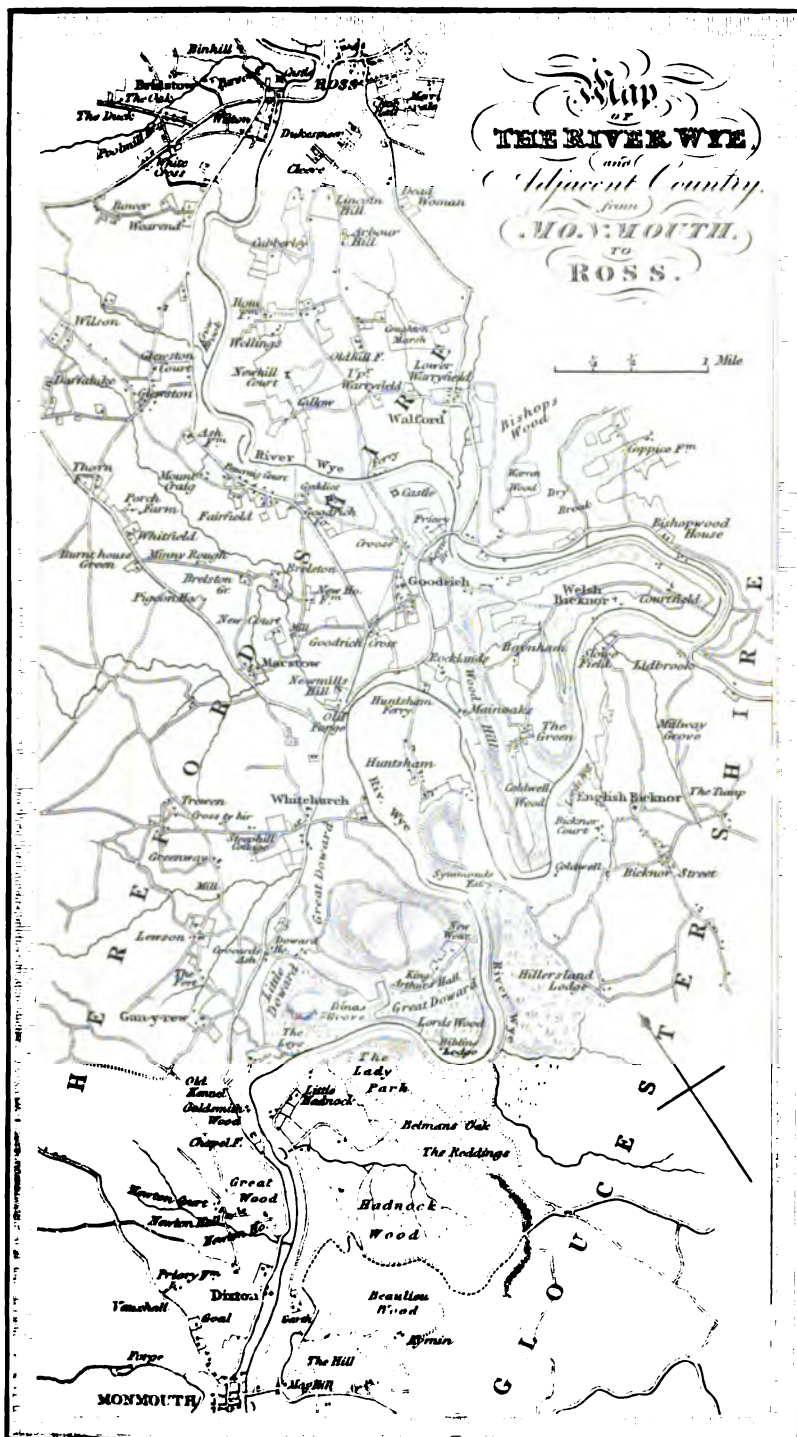
The poet Hayley has some excellent lines to express this longing after an earthly immortality:—

“The fond desire to pass the nameless crowd,
Swept from the earth in dark Oblivion’s cloud;

Of transient life to leave some little trace,
And win remembrance from the rising race ;—
To catch the praise that rose from human breath,
To bind the guerdon past the power of death ;—
And man ere long the wondrous secret found,
To paint the voice, and fix the fleeting sound."

The upper apartments, which are furnished and decorated in correspondence with the titles they bear, consist of Sir Gelley's Chamber, Charles I.'s Room, Charles II.'s Gallery, William III.'s Room, the Prince's Chamber and Dressing-room, the Greek Room, are not usually shown to the public, nor, indeed, are some of the apartments which I have described, but of which I was allowed the inspection by the learned and hospitable owner of Goodrich Court.

We must hasten now from the new Court and its old treasures, and enter the tenantless halls of the Castle, which, seated in its faded but impressive grandeur on an adjoining height, forms a chief object in the delightful landscape commanded by the windows and grounds of the Court. On a near approach, the exterior of Goodrich is less striking than that of many other castles, except the gateway, which is eminently beautiful, flanked by its ivy-grown towers, and showing beneath its arches the lofty window of the opposite tower, and through that the distant Court and its girdling woods. The construction of this fortified entrance is very remarkable. It appears to have been one of the additions made to the fortress down to the time of Henry VI.—the keep, of which I shall speak hereafter, having been erected antecedently to the Conquest. The entrance, commencing between two semicircular towers of unequal dimensions, near the





east angle, is continued under a dark vaulted passage, to an extent of fifty feet. Immediately before this entrance, and within the space inclosed by the fosse, was a very deep pit, hewn out of the solid rock, formerly crossed by a drawbridge, which is now gone, but which appears to have exactly fitted, and to have closed, when drawn up, the whole front of the gateway between the towers. About eleven feet within the passage was a massy gate; this gate and the drawbridge were defended on each side by loopholes, and overhead by rows of machicolations, for pouring down melted lead, scalding water, &c., on the heads of the assailants. Six feet and a half beyond this was a portcullis, and about seven further, a *herse* (a kind of portcullis); the space between these was again protected by loopholes. About two feet more inward, was another strong gate; and beyond this, on the right, a small door leading to a long narrow gallery, formed in the thickness of the wall, which was the means of access to the eastern tower, and commanded the steep brow of the hill towards the north-east. This narrow, dark, winding passage I explored under the guidance of the old deputy-governor of the castle, and was not a little amused by his great anxiety to make me thoroughly conversant with his lore, touching the wonders and merits of Goodrich.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROSS TO MONMOUTH BY WATER—COLDWELL ROCKS—
SYMOND'S YAT—DOWARD—MONMOUTH—RAGLAND.

"Down the swift river, the full-flowing river,
Our light-freighted bark glideth on;
While in the waves ever, the tree shadows quiver—
Oh! who can be gloomy!—not one.
What day is too long, with the merry boat song,
Bright sunshine and blessed blue sky—
While meadow flowers young, o'er the sedgy banks flung,
Nod and laugh as we gaily glide by."

EARLY the following morning, I entered a boat at Ross, on my way to Monmouth. My "light bark" was not much unlike a gondola, when its tarpauling cover was spread over the framework; but, being favoured by a radiantly bright morning, I preferred sitting under the skeleton, and enjoying the charming scenes around me. A table in the centre of the part allotted to passengers, and cushioned seats around, made this small floating parlour a most commodious conveyance. After dropping past Wilton Castle, and beneath the bridge, we soon came in sight of Goodrich Court and Castle, well worthy their far-known fame. Richly wooded hills, well sprinkled with white cottages, whose thin blue smoke curled softly upward, often rose





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in front. Kerne Bridge being passed, and its surrounding bosky hills and sunshiny meadows, Bishop's Wood House appeared. The grounds of Courtfield skirt the river for some distance, adding the great charm of their magnificent ornamental timber to the landscape. Passing the village of Lidbrook, where a steam tram-road from Dean Forest brings coal for embarkation on the Wye, I gained a good view of Courtfield House.* Henry V. is said to have been nursed in a more ancient house on the same site, belonging to the countess of Salisbury (ob. 1395), whose supposed monument in the neighbouring little church of Welsh Bicknor I landed to examine. Sir S. R. Meyrick has somewhat shaken the faith of the learned as respects this monument, pronouncing the costume to be of the time of Edward I. A winged angel on either side the head have been, absurdly enough, supposed to represent the young Henry and his fellow-suckling.

Approaching the foot of Coldwell Rocks, a most sublime and majestic scene presents itself. These grand, and in some places precipitous, limestone cliffs are overhung with richly varied tufts of oak and underwood, traversed by deep dells and gulleys. The smooth luxuriant hill called Rosemary Topping, beautifully contrasts with and enhances the magnificent sternness of these wild crags. For a considerable distance they present one continued panorama of grandeur and sub-

* The estate connected with this place formerly belonged to the family of the Vaughans, the descendants of Cradoc Vreich Vras—Cradoc of the strong arm—with whom is associated that beautiful poetical tale of "the boy and the mantle," to be found in "Percy's Reliques."

limity. Arrived at the landing-place for the ascent of Symond's Yat, I disembarked, and wended my weary way to the summit, through a wood abounding in curious plants, and gay with a rich profusion of wild autumn berries. On attaining the small platform of rock crowning the narrow ridge, round which the river makes the extraordinary circuit of four miles, a view of great grandeur displayed itself, and reclining on the turf, telescope in hand, I quietly enjoyed it. The chief eminences in Radnor and Brecknockshire, the Malvern Hills, Black Mountains, and the immediately near range of limestone crags, with the river winding brightly beneath, and distant spires and towers peeping above their encircling woods, all lit up in fair sunshine, made a grand and interesting picture.*

A double entrenchment runs across this

"Tower of rock, that seems to cry,
Go round about me, neighbour Wye."

A few coracles were on the river, with their still, patient occupants, the salmon fishers, as I passed round the peninsular-shaped flat beyond Symond's Yat, and by the diminutive church of Whitechurch. Large

* Upon the Little Doward, a hill of peculiarly fine outline, viewed in front, from the Monmouth road, are the interesting remains of a British camp. Three circular terraces wind up to the summit. It is a valuable relic of British fortification, where Caractacus probably posted himself, for how otherwise are the adjacent Roman camps on the Great Doward and Symond's Yat to be accounted for! Ostorius probably attempted to force him by the Great Doward, but apparently did not succeed, and, being compelled to cross the river, encamped at Symond's Yat. The inference is drawn from the circumstance of the Gauls having taken up a position protected by a river, where even Cæsar declined action.—*Rev. T. D. Fosbrooke.*



THE FALL OF THE WATER
J. M. W. Turner







masses of rock are here insulated by the river, which vainly chafes and foams among them. The great Doward Hill soon rose in all its grandeur on the right, galleried throughout by quarries, and rendered wildly beautiful by the misty smoke from its numerous kilns and cottages, which are sprinkled all over its fantastic heights, wherever a tiny cabin can find room to perch itself. The New Weir here received our boat in its swelling eddy, and the foaming, roaring water added not a little to the interest of the scene. Lofty rocks now rise on both sides, robed in infinite varieties of wood and shrub of every imaginable tint, showing the pale grey of the limestones, contrasted richly by the bright red, green, yellow, and brown of the autumn foliage. Many portions of the craggy cliffs have the appearance of ruined castles and towers. Three remarkable ones are named the three sisters,—Ann, Mary, and Elizabeth,—right venerable personages. King Arthur, that hero of “oldenne tyme,” has a hall and chair named to his honour in this neighbourhood; the latter is a semicircular hollow near the Little Doward, on which are the remains of a British camp. Here, in a spot called Martin’s Pool, the river is said to be seventy feet deep. Handsome and tasteful residences now frequently appear on the wooded banks, among which the Leys, Vaga Cottage, and Newton Hall, are the chief.

The approach to Monmouth is very pleasing, and the town occupies a position of great beauty, lying in a valley surrounded by hills, and nearly encircled by two rivers, the Wye and Monnow. The few remains of the castle stand upon an eminence to the south of the

Monnow. A British fortress is said to have existed here previously to the Roman Conquest, and to have been occupied by the Saxons. The castle is supposed to have been rebuilt by John, baron of Monmouth, who, in 1257, resigned it to Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I. In 1265, Simon, earl of Leicester, besieged Gilbert, earl of Gloucester, and levelled the castle with the ground. It was, however, rebuilt, and devolved to John of Gaunt, whose son, Henry of Bolingbroke, was afterwards Henry IV., during whose reign this fortress became the birth-place of Henry V., consequently surnamed Harry of Monmouth.

The priory was founded by Withenoc de Monmouth, in the reign of Henry I., for Benedictine monks, and suppressed at the dissolution. Traces of it are visible to the north of St. Mary's Church. Old Lambarde says it was "a small monastery, valued in the Records at fifty-six poundes by yeare." The Priory-house, which is now used as a national school, contains an apartment, celebrated as the library of Galfredius Arthurius, bishop of St. Asaph, much better known by the name of Geoffrey of Monmouth,

"The chronicler of Briton's kinges,
From Brute to Arthur's rayne."

He is supposed to have been educated in this monastery, and was appointed archdeacon of Monmouth in 1151; but was shortly afterwards advanced to the bishopric of St. Asaph, in the time of Henry II. He translated the history of Britain from the ancient British language into the Latin, and also the amusing prophecies of Merlin from British verse into Latin

prose. Our great Welsh hero, Owen Glyndwr, was much indebted to these prophetic writings, as they rendered him essential service, by favouring his high pretensions to sovereignty. The veracity of Geoffrey, as an historian, has been doubted by many; Camden remarks, that his relation of Brutus and his successors ought to be totally disregarded; but Fuller speaks honourably of his literary labours, and compares him to Herodotus. "There is no reason," says the learned historian of St. Asaph, "why he should be so bitterly inveighed against, concerning the famous history under his name, he being no more than the *Fidus interpret*, or translator of it, and making himself in no ways accountable for the credit of the story delivered in his book, the blame of which, as his apologists allege, ought to be laid upon his authors, and not upon him; since upon a late examination, he is found not to have invented, or added anything of his own." Of his character, however, it is said, "that he was all his lifetime a great courtier, entirely at the king's beck, busying himself in the royal party against Thomas à Becket, and was employed to absolve Richard de Lucy and others from the excommunication of that proud prelate."

Monmouth is one of those clean, pleasant, country towns, having within itself the vivacity of intelligent and social life, and possessing in its neighbourhood the attributes of surpassing natural beauty. Its thoroughfares are comparatively spacious, and a great improvement has been effected lately by the formation of a handsome crescent-street, overlooking the river Monnow, with a rich and varied landscape, backed by the

bold outlines of the Sugar Loaf range of mountains. At the east end a noble building has just been completed in the Grecian order, as a market-place; containing underneath an extensive range of *abattoirs*, with every convenience attached to it. To families of respectability this town offers many inducements; it is the centre of the Wye scenery, and affords innumerable picturesque walks and rides. The prices of provisions and necessaries are moderate; river-fish, fruits, and vegetables are abundant; and the climate is rendered mild and healthy, by the screen of the surrounding hills from prejudicial winds. Angling is a common diversion; and, during the season, packs of fox-hounds and harriers yield amusement to the sportsman. The present trade of Monmouth is principally in timber and bark, for which the ample forests in its neighbourhood render it peculiarly suitable. The celebrated "Monmouth caps," mentioned by Shakspeare, and described by Fuller as "the most warm and profitable coverings of men's heads in this island," are no longer the staple commodity at this place; the manufacture, "on the occasion of a great plague happening in this town," having been removed to Bewdley; but the chapel of St. Thomas, an interesting specimen of Saxon architecture, formerly belonging to the members of the "craft," still exists. This edifice is of very ancient date, and had stood for a long time in a dilapidated condition, but it has recently been repaired and fitted up under the direction of Mr. Wyatt of Troy House, in excellent keeping with the original building, and possesses two fine original specimens of the Saxon arch and doorway.

The bridge over the Monnow, which was built by

Edward I., in 1272, will attract the inspection of the visiter, not only for its own sake, but because there stands upon it the remains of one of the ancient gates of the town, which is quite an object of antiquarian curiosity. Surmounting the Saxon gateway is a room which has been sometimes used as a guard-room or a magazine, and immediately above the arch are three loopholes, which were made by the authorities of the place, through which to defend the town, in 1839, from the expected visit of the Chartists of Newport.

The traveller who enters an ancient town like this of Monmouth, commences his researches amongst these mouldering remains, which carry him back in imagination to the dark and bloody ages of the nation's history, over which, it may be, the enterprise of some daring spirit has shed a transient and delusive halo. Those institutions of benevolence which distinguish the comparatively modern days of England, are passed by as common-place things, and scarcely excite an inquiry. There is one, however, in this place, over which an air of romance is thrown which will go far to rescue it from this general neglect. On the south-east side of the town stands a row of neat almshouses, which bears a tablet in the centre, instructing the stranger's eye that it was founded by William Jones, "citizen and haberdasher of London, in 1615." The founder was the child of poor parents residing in Newland, a neighbouring parish, and lived at an inn in Monmouth, in one of the most menial situations. Such was his poverty that he was obliged to leave the town, from his inability to pay some trifling debt he had contracted. He repaired to London, and engaged as a porter to a

Hamburgh merchant, which place he fulfilled so much to the satisfaction of his master, that he had him instructed in the necessary qualifications for a counting-house, and successively promoted him to the situation of supercargo in one of his vessels, and general manager of his business, till he finally resigned the whole of his mercantile affairs in his favour. As a merchant on his own account he soon rose to great opulence, and became a member of the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers. A strange conceit seems to have taken him at this time, and he determined upon an expedition to his native place in the character of a pauper. Having put on his beggarly gabardine, he presented himself before the authorities to claim assistance in his new character, but was rudely repulsed and referred to Monmouth as his place of settlement. To Monmouth he repaired, and with better success; for his wants were kindly relieved, and he left the place in the same disguise in which he had entered it. This kindness he never forgot, and at his death devised a splendid benefaction, for the building of twenty almshouses and the endowment of a school, which, from the judicious investment of the trustees, and the increase in the value of property, will, in process of time, furnish an establishment of the most valuable kind in the kingdom. The good man was forgiving in his disposition, and though he did not forget the treatment he received in his native place, he bequeathed a handsome sum for the same purposes in Newland, though not equal in amount, nor so successfully managed.

The Kymin, about a mile and a half from Monmouth, is a lofty eminence, rising nearly 700 feet from the bed

of the Wye, surmounted by a monument in commemoration of the gallant admirals of the British navy; and the "Summer House," a circular embattled tower about thirty feet high, erected by subscription for the social parties of Monmouth, before its harmony was disturbed by political factions. The summit is spread over a beautiful table-land, on which is an avenue of pine and other trees, and the foreground forms a succession of vignettes of broken rocks and intermingled foliage. The hill-point slopes gently down towards the east and south in corn-fields and pastures, and is backed by the dark umbrage of Stanton Meend. On the west, the view is extensive and delightful almost beyond description, comprehending, in the utmost range of vision, the beacons of Brecon, and the distant mountains of Glamorganshire, and gradually subsiding to the wood-crowned hills that spring from the Wye, the lovely vale in which beats the heart of Monmouth—that heart of many chords,—and the sportive river, which holds on its gladsome way, now gently drawn out like a shining thread amidst the green meadows, and now rushing with a turbulence so unlike its usual placid humour between its stony walls, and over those immense fragments of broken rocks that in vain attempt to impede its course.

The Buckstone—a mile south-east of the Kymin—is a famous rocking-stone of the Druids, which may be seen distinctly rising from amongst the woods that surround it. Such stones formed an important feature in the ancient Celtic superstitions, and were used in divination, the vibration determining the oracle. Their sound, when violently pushed, very probably served to

arouse the country on an enemy's approach ; and the passage or path invariably found encircling them, intimates the perambulation to have been a sacred performance. The situation of the stone near Monmouth, was evidently chosen because it could be conspicuous for miles round.

Quitting Monmouth, on an excursion to Ragland Castle, my way lay over a considerable hill about a mile from the town, commanding a most lovely and luxuriant landscape. From this eminence, the rich valley in which Monmouth is situated, and the beauties of the surrounding country, are seen to great advantage.

The castle lies a short distance from the village of Ragland, on an elevated site, and forms the most picturesque and beautiful ruin I am anywhere acquainted with. It may rather be termed a castellated mansion than a castle, and is, in many parts, in good preservation, much of the elaborate carved stone-work remaining as sharp and distinct as when first erected. The general view, obtained on entering the gates, is truly magnificent. Immediately in front is the grand entrance, guarded by three massive towers, their summits gracefully adorned with ivy, which hangs in thick drapery over the dim Gothic arch, through which a glimpse is gained of the decayed splendour of the inner court. The citadel, or Yellow Tower, as it was called, with its bastions, stands on the left ; its surrounding moat is adorned by trees and shrubs, springing from crevices in the mouldering walls, and dipping their branches in the reflecting water below. A geometrical staircase leads to the top, where an extensive and diversified view may be enjoyed.



BAEDERER'S CASTLE



Ragland does not claim so many antiquarian honours as some other castles, not having been erected prior to the reign of Henry V.; many additions were made to it in that of Elizabeth, and also so late as Charles I. The fashions of the arches, doors, windows, &c., are progressively of the intermediate ages. Its construction may be ascribed principally to Sir William ap Thomas, and his son, the earl of Pembroke; additions were made by the earls of Worcester, and the citadel and outworks were probably added by the marquis of Worcester, who last resided in this sumptuous mansion.

During the civil commotions, Charles I. made several visits to Ragland Castle, and was entertained with great magnificence. At one time the king, being apprehensive lest the stores of the castle should be consumed by his suite, empowered the marquis of Worcester to exact from the country such provisions as were necessary for his remuneration. "I humbly thank your Majesty," he answered, "but my castle would not long stand if it leaned upon the country; I had rather be brought to a morsel of bread, than that any morsels of bread should be *exacted* from others." A speech worthy of remembrance and appreciation.

The extreme beauty of parts of this grand edifice no pen, and but few pencils, can justly present to those who know not the reality.* The Fountain Court (so

* It may not be amiss here to mention the obligations which the proprietors of this work are under to that highly-esteemed artist, and faithful delineator of scenery, Mr. David Cox, whose pencil has enriched and enhanced the value, not only of this volume, but also of that recently published on the Northern part of the Principality.

The Beaufort Arms, at Ragland, is an excellent house.

called from a fountain of a white horse, long since departed) is singularly beautiful; and the unobtrusive and truly good taste which has in some places added the loveliness and fragrance of sweet flowers, roses, jasmine, &c., among the "clamb'ring ivy," is extremely pleasing. The space of ground within the castle walls is upwards of four acres. A smoothly-turfed raised terrace surrounds the moat; and stately pageantries of olden days seem to revive from their long sleep, and airily glide before us while pacing along its quiet expanse. The Grand Hall has been cruelly disfigured by a recent daubing of the walls to imitate wainscot, done in preparation for a great banquet, given a short time since by the country gentlemen to Lord Granville Somerset, one of their members. To this hall was formerly attached a music gallery, and as the earl of Worcester was governor of all South Wales, the bards had used to assemble here on occasions of state. The present silence and solitude of the place is a strange contrast to that ecstasy of life and melody that in former times rang through it so merrily.

The parks appertaining to this magnificent domain once extended to the distance of four miles. The camp of the besieging army, under Sir Thomas Fairfax, occupied a ridge of land about half a mile to the eastward of the castle, at the back of which were extensive fish-ponds, covering a space of twenty acres. On the surrender of the castle, the magnificent library of the noble proprietor, said to be the finest in Europe, was completely destroyed. The apothegms of the marquiss of Worcester are remarkable both for their wit and stern truth. The discourses which he held with

the unfortunate Charles, while he sojourned here, were singular for their boldness, and remind us of those which took place at Denbigh Castle with the same prince, when Sir John Salusbury, commonly called Blue Stocking, was governor of that fortress.

Returning to Monmouth, Troy House claims a passing notice for the sake of the antiquities it is said to contain,—viz., the cradle of Henry V., apparently a machine of much more recent construction than its assigned era; a suit of armour allotted by tradition to the same royal hero in his exploits at Agincourt, and a fine carved chimney-piece from Ragland Castle, whence, doubtless, the other two antiques have been obtained, having belonged to some of the Worcester family. An interesting little church at Micheltroy, and a curious cross in the pretty churchyard, where laurels and other evergreens form a garden among the tombs, attracted my attention in passing; but nothing worthy of any lengthened description stayed my return to Monmouth, which, with its bright river and lovely scenery, looked in the distance like Fairy-land.

Five miles from Monmouth, at the village of Treleck, are some interesting Druidical and British antiquities, consisting of monumental stones, sacred springs, an enormous tumulus, and other remains. On the height of Craig y dorth, close by, Owen Glyndwr obtained a victory

CHAPTER IX.

REDBROOK—LLANDOGO—BROCKWEIR—TINTERN—WIND-
CLIFF—PIERCEFIELD—CHEPSTOW—BRISTOL CHANNEL.

O sylvan Wye, thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee !
——— Thy beauteous forms,
Through a long absence have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye :
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration.

WORDSWORTH'S WYE REVISITED.

A CALM bright afternoon of autumn found me quietly journeying from royal Monmouth towards the end of my pleasant Wye wanderings ; few greater pleasures could befall me than the enjoyment of Nature's glories so lavishly bestowed around. For a considerable distance the scenery maintained the same rich character. On the Monmouthshire side of the river, a mile below the town, is the Church of Penalt, situated on the steep side of a wooded eminence, at the back of which is an extensive common. On this common is a large oak-tree, and at its foot a stone seat. When a corpse is brought by, on its way to the place of interment, it

is deposited on this stone, and the company sing a psalm over the body. Psalmody over the corpse signified the conquest of the deceased friend over hell, sin, and death. Here is an evident continuation of the *oak* and *stones* of Druidism and Celtic customs, altered into a Christian form. It is "the song of bards, which rose over the dead," mentioned in Ossian's death of Cuthullin; an accompaniment of the Irish howl, and altered by the popes into the trental.

The road winds for some distance along the side of lofty wooded hills, amid whose deep recesses the woodman's axe was ringing, followed often by the rustling and heavy fall of some doomed tree; while groups of women and children, busily engaged in barking the fallen timber, sent forth many a peal of merry-cadenced laughter. Instead of detailing these beauties of autumn in prose, I cannot do better than borrow a description, which in its materials will be found the metrical version of every one's thoughts in this woodland district.

"Come now to the forest, for Autumn is there,
 She is painting its millions of leaves,
 With colours so varied, so rich, and so rare,
 That the eye scarce her cunning believes :
 She tinges and changes each leaf o'er and o'er,
 Nor flings it to earth till 'twill vary no more.

"The glorious cedars she ever in vain
 Tries to dress in chameleon hue,
 For they brave all her arts, and the verdure retain
 Of their Spring-time the whole Winter through :
 And the sturdy Soot's fir lifts its dark-crested head
 Unchanged o'er the path where the brown leaves are spread."

Upper and Lower Redbrook, beyond Penalt, on the Gloucestershire side, present, in their busy manufac-

turing activity, a lively, and, in passing, not an unpleasant contrast to the stillness of the wide hills and woods; large iron and tin works being carried on there. The small stream which gives the villages their name, serves to turn several mills; and the little cottages mingled with other more pretending structures in the village valley, with the woods around, and the Hill of Highbury to the south (apparently the site of an ancient intrenchment), form an interesting landscape. Passing on by Whitebrook, a busy station for paper-mills, Pen y Van Hill appears on the right bank, a large heathery eminence, with a promontory-like summit crowned by a Maypole, around which the merry dances and festivities of the olden time are kept up by the peasantry in due season, with great spirit. Bordering the road, about a mile from where it crosses the river, is a tasteful Anglo-Swiss cottage residence, called "The Florence," the shooting-seat of the late Captain Rooke.

Crossing the Wye over a handsome iron bridge, cast at Merthyr Tydvil, Big's Weir House, the forsaken family mansion of Mr. Rooke's forefathers, with its gardens and terraces, forms an important and pleasing object in the view; behind which rises the lofty Hudknolls, on whose summit the remains of St. Briavel's Castle still exist. The fortress of St. Briavel stands on the verge of the forest of Dean; it was built by the earl of Hereford, in the reign of Henry I., and appears to have been of considerable magnitude and strength; it was formerly the residence of the Lords Warden of the marches of England and Wales; and in it there is still held an occasional court—a remnant of feudal





11. *Waters, from a sketch by J. H. H. H.*

Saxon jurisprudence. From the summit are rich and varied prospects, including several villages and woods, the bright meandering river, and many distant eminences.

We now enter the little village of Llandogo, on the right of which is a new mansion belonging to J. Gough, Esq., of Perry Barr, in Staffordshire, erected in the Tudor style, from a design by Mr. Wyatt, of London. It is built of the rich red stone of the hill quarry, and occupies a terraced site surrounded by a buttressed wall, on the woody side of the Cleddon hill, and is itself a beautiful object to the eye of the traveller, while it commands, from its bay-windows, the beauties of the surrounding scenery. Near it is a ravine closely embraced by overhanging trees, down which flows the cascade of Cleddon Shoots. Presently the Wye becomes a tide river, and the former purity of the stream is quite sullied and lost. Brookweir or Brockweir, a prettily situated and populous little hamlet, lies on the left bank, and from the sights and sounds about, I should conclude shipbuilding to be the reigning craft of the place. Here large trows from Bristol, borne up by the tide, transfer their heavy loadings to lighter vessels. Brockweir is about nine miles from Monmouth, and midway between the town and Chepstow by water.

Following a short bend of the river round some verdant meadows, we pass the small straggling village of Tintern Parva, at the head of which is the little towerless church, with its two venerable yews, and the ruined building of what was once probably the private dwelling of the abbot of Tintern; and passing round another horse-shoe curve, reach Abbey Tintern, amid whose squalid huts and dingy houses the stately ruin of

its once and even still magnificent Abbey Church rears its proud head.

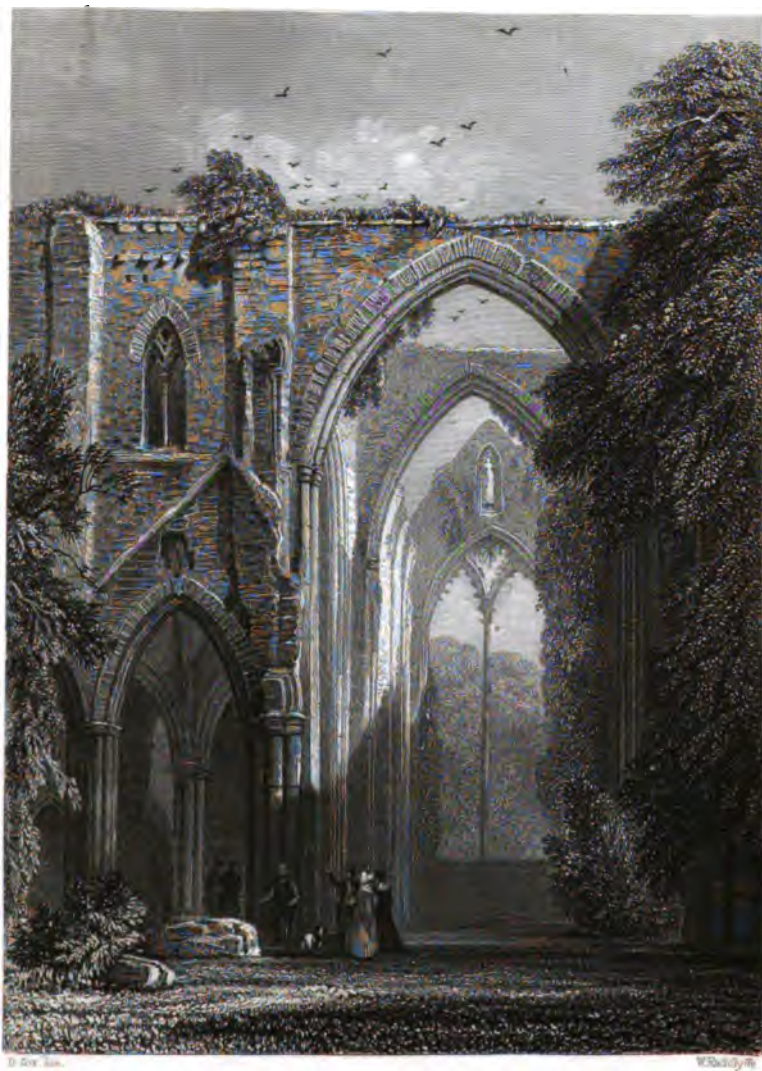
"How many hearts have here grown cold,
That sleep these mouldering stones among !
How many beads have here been told !
How many matins here been sung.

* * * *

"But here no more soft music floats,
No holy anthems chanted now ;
All hushed except the ring-dove's notes,
Low murmur'ing from yon beachen bough."

Seated in a picturesque and mountain-girt valley, close to the Wye, the position of Tintern Abbey is every way calculated to render it a grand landscape beauty. With eyes bent on the ground, the visitor carefully enters the low western door, and then raising his glance and gazing around, he is either less easily excited to admiration, or has more command over himself than I, if he can refrain from some demonstration of delight. The ruin is two hundred and thirty feet in length, and sixty-three in breadth. The transept is one hundred and fifty feet long.

The architecture is scarcely even defaced by time, but few columns having fallen ; and the loss of these is partly hidden, and quite compensated for, by the rich, heavy folds of nature's most graceful drapery, luxuriant ivy, which adorns the lofty aisles and transepts of this majestic edifice, and scarcely suffers us to regret that it is a ruin. Small ferns and flowers of many hues spring from every ledge and opening, and the massy broken walls sustain a tiny forest of ash, and privet, and wild intertwining roses,—while the fragrant and beautiful wall-flower wanders over arch and window, decking



ST. PETER'S CHURCH, YORK.



them with its fair garb of green and gold, and crowning the decaying pile as with a halo.

The area of the ruin has been rather too neatly cleared, and is smoothly turfed over, with the prostrate columns and fragments ranged carefully along. But the very smoothness of the ground, however inconsistent, perhaps only renders the grand proportions of the "long-drawn aisle" more striking and beautiful. Roofed only by the vault of heaven—paved only with the grass of earth, Tintern is probably now more impressive and truly beautiful, than when "with storied windows richly dight;" for Nature has claimed her share in its adornment, and what painter of glass, or weaver of tapestry, may be matched with her? The singularly light and elegant eastern window, with its one tall mullion ramifying at the top, and leaving the large open spaces beneath to admit the distant landscape of the waving woods of Shorn Cliff, is one chief feature in Tintern. The western window is peculiarly rich in ornament, and those of the two transepts of like character, though less elevated. By the kindness of the duke of Beaufort, a strong iron railing is passed round the upper walls, so that the visitor may with safety traverse the greater part of the transept, at a considerable height from the floor. I availed myself of his grace's provision, and mounted the winding staircase, tablets in hand, and became sensible how much better my eye could measure the magnitude of the building from this midway elevation. I had no sooner ascended this tower than the sentinel crow gave audible notice of my intrusion, and the whole ruins became vocal with the petulant clamour of the ebony tribe

against this invasion of their ancient domain. Even from the height on which I stood, the strangers below appeared little better than pigmies, and the sonorous voice of the old *cicerone* sounded strangely as he told to each new comer his wearisome tale. When I had finished my aerial survey, I descended again to the floor, and passed in review confessionals and sacristy, refectory, kitchens, and dormitories, all silent, tenantless, and in ruins. The area of the refectory bears an orchard of apple and pear trees, which, in the blossoming season, must look like the very bitterness of mockery upon these deserted halls. The wilderness of nettles, creepers, wild weeds, and old fantastic trees, that crowd the garden, seem as if they had mobbed the good fathers out of their paradise, and set up a democracy of all ill-looking, irreverend, and venomous things. The northern and southern doorways are of a different architectural order to the purer Gothic style of the rest of the abbey, and bear evidences of the transition state from the Saxon to the Norman styles.

Several mutilated monuments lie among the architectural fragments on the turf; one represents a knight in chain-mail, with crossed legs, as a crusader, or a vovée to take the cross: it is ascribed to Gilbert Strongbow (a hero often spoken of in these pages), as the Abbey Chronicle mentioned his interment here. Sir S. R. Meyrick considers the effigy to be that of Roger de Bigod.

"In the year 610, Ceolwulph, king of Wessex, attacked the Britons in Glamorganshire. Theodoric, or Tewdric, the Welsh Roitelet of that country, had resigned the throne to his son Maurice, and 'led an



W. Ratcliff. 1857. 12/8. 12/8.



eremitical life among the rocks of Dindyrn.' His former subjects used to say, that he had always been victorious, and that as soon as he shewed his face his enemies took to flight. They accordingly dragged him from the desert against his will, and the royal hermit, once more a general, routed the Saxons at this place. In the action he received a mortal wound on the head, and desired his body to be buried, and a church to be built upon the spot where he should happen to die. This place was Mathern, near Chepstow; and Bishop Godwin says that he there saw his remains in a stone coffin."

Tintern Abbey was founded for Cistercian Monks, in 1131, by Walter de Clare, "for the health of my soul," as his charter ran, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. This Walter was a descendant of a family to whom William the Conqueror gave sundry estates in this neighbourhood, together with the privilege of possessing all he could wrest from the Welsh. He was succeeded by his brother Gilbert, surnamed Strongbow, first earl of Pembroke, who confirmed to the monks all the lands, possessions, liberties, and immunities granted by his predecessors. Afterwards, the male line failing, the heiress was married to Hugh Bigod, earl of Norfolk. At the time of the dissolution there were only thirteen inmates. The abbey and estates were given by Henry VIII. to the earl of Worcester, and subsequently became the property of the dukes of Beaufort.

The remnants of the wall which inclosed the abbey grounds may yet be seen on one side climbing the hill, amidst the green umbrage of the forest, and on the other stands the water-gate, with its ruined defences,

through which the monks issued to cast a dragon-fly on the stream, and furnish the refectory with the delicious "salmons" of the bountiful Wye.

The road gradually ascends beyond Tintern, to a considerable height above the river, embracing grand and varied prospects, combining the rugged cliffs of the opposite bank, partially adorned by wood; the broad quiet river, speckled with its coracles and salmon-fishers, looking in the distance like walnut-shells set floating by fairies; and the grand precipitous rocks, through which the road is made, rising abruptly from the shadowed path, or fantastically grouped with rich wood and waving flowers, stretching towards the blue heaven above. But I would pray the reader to pause when he arrives at the point immediately opposite the northern aspect of the old ruin, and contemplate for a moment the beautiful doorway, which there presents itself, with its pediment surmounted by green branches and white elder-flowers,—to glance through the line of arches that spring along the transept,—and to watch the bright sunshine gleaming through the glorious marigold, and glittering amongst the bold projections and rich tracery of its exquisite window.

I must confess that I was disappointed at the first sight of Tintern Abbey. The straggling row of common-place buildings that marshalled the road to it, and the low miserable cottages that surrounded it, served greatly to subdue the enthusiasm in which I had indulged on the way; but when I stood upon the green floor of the venerable ruins, and gazed upon this almost perfect example of architectural beauty, I felt that I had come within the magic circle of enchant-

ment, from which I had neither the power nor the wish to escape. Nor is it only the magnificence and grace of the ruined buildings which attract the eye on all sides and fill the mind ; but the memory is unlocked, the reading of ancient days is set forth in all its ample leaves, and imagination supplies the august and glowing pictures that belong to the age of its glory, when the high altar blazed with light at the sacrifice of the mass, or when the full rich voices of the monks chanted the Breviary service, from the early matins and lauds to the evening vespers and complins,—when the bright summer sun flashed through its painted windows, and fell upon the tessellated pavement in a “glorious path of rays,” for the solemn procession of the holy fathers, or gleamed with mild lustre amongst the pointed arches, when the solitary brother, in penitence and prayer, told his Ave Maria before the image of the Blessed Virgin. I felt the devotional sentiment steal gently over me, and I stayed not to inquire whether sense or faith, whether spiritual perceptions or mere imagination, had most to do in calling it forth : it was sufficient for me that it was present to my consciousness, transfusing the past, the present, and the future, into one mingled stream of rich, grateful feeling.

“Shades of past fame, farewell ! the glooms ye cast !
The melancholy pleasures ye have bred !
There are, who fain would fly into the past,
And where I, but a weeping pilgrim, tread,
As cowed monks hide for aye the aching head !”

About three miles from Tintern, a fanciful little habitation, called the “Moss Cottage,” appears to the right of the road, built by the duke of Beaufort, for the

accommodation of parties visiting Windcliff, to the summit of which grand eminence, several paths lead through the rocks and underwood. The most approved plan is to ascend by a somewhat circuitous, but easy route, nearer St. Arvan's. On gaining the open space, one of the most extensive and beautiful views that can be imagined bursts upon the eye, or rather, I should say, a vast group of views of distinct and opposite character here seem to blend and unite in one. At a depth of about eight hundred feet, the steep descent below presents in some places single projecting rocks; in others, a green bushy precipice. In the valley, the eye follows for several miles the course of the Wye, which issues from a wooded glen on the left hand, curves round a green garden-like peninsula, rising into a hill studded with beautiful clumps of trees, then forces its foaming way to the right, along a huge wall of rock, nearly as high as the point where you stand, and at length, beyond Chepstow Castle, which looks like a ruined city, empties itself into the Bristol Channel, where ocean closes the dim and misty distance. On the other side of the river, immediately in front, the peaked tops of a long ridge of hills extend nearly the whole district which the eye commands. It is thickly clothed with wood, out of which a continuous wall of rock, festooned with ivy, picturesquely rears its head. Over this ridge (Llancaut Cliffs, or Bannagor Crags) you again discern water,—the Severn five miles broad, thronged with white sails, on either side of which are seen blue ridges of hills, full of fertility and cultivation. The grouping of the landscape is perfect. I know of no picture more beautiful. Inexhaustible in



THE RIVER AFTER THE GREAT FLOOD.

W. P. WOOD.



details, of boundless extent, and yet marked by such grand and prominent features, that confusion and monotony, the usual defects of a very wide prospect, are completely avoided. The descent from Windcliff to the Moss Cottage is easily made by means of steps cut in the rock, amid shrubs and wood of great variety and beauty, and presents the landscape in an unceasing diversity of forms.

Piercefield Park, the marvel of the last and the attraction of the present generation, extends nearly from Windcliff to Chepstow, and is certainly a beautiful example of landscape-gardening; but to a mind which has become familiarized with the grand and simple scenes of nature, a ramble through the three-mile walk of Piercefield Terrace is far less gratifying than the same distance would prove through the wild greenwood, or over the breezy hills. Maugre all this, we owe much to the taste which has adorned this place, and to the liberality which has thrown it open to the public for their gratification.

The attractions of Piercefield arise from the peculiar features of nature, forming almost every element in pictorial composition, which are assembled on this spot, or which belong to its neighbourhood. The park itself is comparatively small, not extending over more than three hundred acres, in the centre of which is the mansion; but the varieties on its surface, and the manner in which it gently undulates on one side, and on the other descends precipitately into a deep vale,—the thick majestic woods, which encompass some portions of it, and the graceful masses that adorn others,—the single trees that fling their arms on all

sides in supreme beauty,—the gentle slopes, the rising hills, the stern bald crags, the rolling river giving the sweet voice of its waters to the umbrage around,—the mingling of colours under the first tints of autumn,—the sublime, the terrific, and the beautiful, singularly, and as it were accidentally, combined, give to Piercefield a charm, which makes it the Hafod or the Elan of Monmouthshire. The hand of taste has been here too, not in its crudities and patchwork, but in its enchanting disclosures of the natural beauties and sublime originals of the place, in its graceful combinations, and in its captivating allurements of shades and openings, and winning promises of fresh delights to the onward visitor. The kindly feeling of the proprietor is obvious in the provision he has made of walks and ascents for the most comprehensive views, of resting-places for the foot of the traveller, of grottos scooped from the rocks, and of flower-embroidered alcoves, where the wood's minstrelsy may be most enjoyed, and in the labour he has employed to afford engagement to the memory and the fancy, while the senses have been thus regaled,—and all this surrounded, as it is, by the wild and untameable in nature, by gibbous and craggy rocks, precipices, magnificent mountains, the boundless forest, and tracks of heath and moorland.

The proprietor to whom Piercefield owes its improvement, and the public their enjoyment, was Mr. Valentine Morris. His history is short and melancholy. In the course of the American war he was appointed governor of the island of St. Vincent, where he expended a large sum from his own private fortune in its fortifications. Upon its fall, the minister of the day disavowed





W. B. 111111

RAIN, STEAM, AND GREAT RAILWAY BRIDGE.
The Storm in the distance

his claim for compensation. His creditors became clamorous, and he was cast into the King's Bench prison, where he languished for twelve years. He was released from his confinement, broken in health and spirits, suffering most of all from the domestic calamity which his fallen fortunes had produced, in the insanity of his wife, and shortly after he died at the house of a relative in London. He was a generous and benevolent man, as the poor of his neighbourhood could well testify. On his departure for the West Indies, they came in troops to bid him a tearful farewell, and the muffled bells of the neighbouring church rang a funeral knell as he left the home of his love, and the scenes which he had embellished both by his taste and his life.

From Llancaut Crag, on the opposite bank, a view is gained little inferior to the one at Windcliff; indeed, the difficulty would be to find a spot in this picture-like neighbourhood whence some grand or picturesque prospect could *not* be enjoyed; and numerous delightfully situated residences prove how well the surrounding beauties are appreciated.

On approaching Chepstow, the main point of attraction is its ancient castle, a grand ruin crowning the whole length of a projecting rock, near which a handsome iron bridge spans the now busy river. According to Lambarde, the Saxons named this place Chepstow, "which is," as the chronicler writes, "no more to say but a market, bycause it lay comodiouslye to bringe thinges unto, and vented theim abroad where nede was, at it yet dothe." Under the name of Estbrighoel or Striguil, the castle is mentioned in Domesday Book; and is said to have been built by William Fitzosborn,

earl of Hereford, killed in 1070, who erected it out of the ruins of the ancient *Caerwent*, or *Venta Silurum*. The remains show that the old castle was nearly all taken down, and rebuilt in the thirteenth century. The duke of Beaufort holds it by descent from the Herberts.

Castles were built according to the form of the ground; that at Caerlaverock being a triangle; and Chepstow is a parallelogram, standing on a high rock, and consists of successive courts flanked on the land side by an immense ditch and town walls, and on the other side by the Wye. The entrance is by a gateway with round towers: between these are machicolations. The ancient gates remain, and consist of planks covered with iron plates laid upon a strong lattice, and fastened by iron bolts. Within one door is the original wicket, about three feet high, and only eighteen inches wide; requiring no small care to enter its narrow aperture, and climb over its high step without personal detriment.

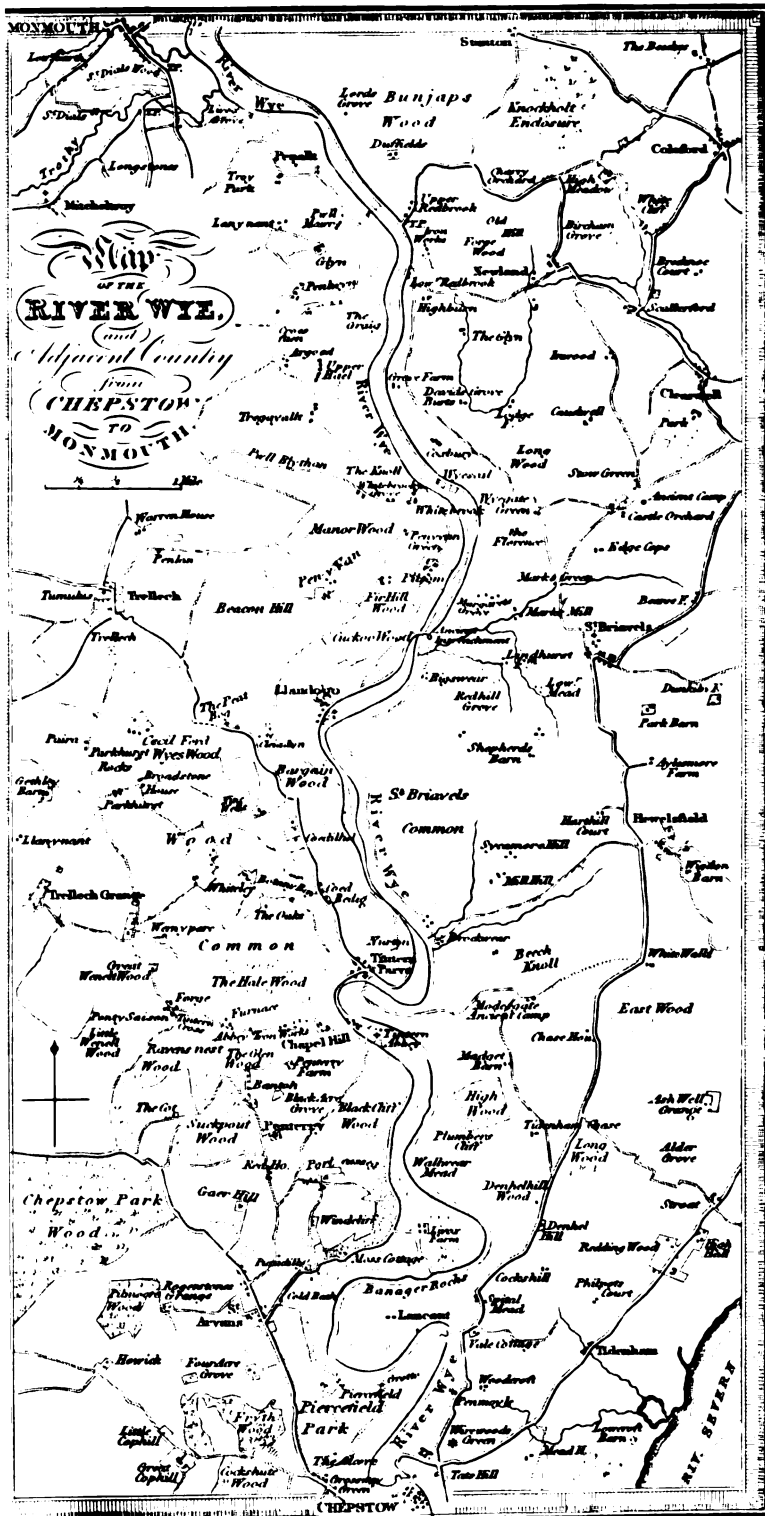
Passing under the portcullis-arch, the first court is entered, in which the domestic offices were situated; and a tower at the south-east extremity is pointed out as the one in which Henry Marten, one of the judges of Charles I., passed, for the most part of twenty years, a dreary imprisonment, and where he ended his life.* This tower was the keep or citadel. The exterior wall

* Henry Marten was the son of Sir Henry Marten, a celebrated judge in the time of James I. He is described as a man of great intelligence and exquisite wit, but of licentious manners. He is said to have died as he lived, "with the fierce spirit of a republican." He wrote his own epitaph in the form of an acrostic, which is placed over his grave, in the north transept of the church, containing sentiments better suited to a sceptic than a Puritan preacher, as he at one time was

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is much more ancient than the one facing the court, and the interior appears to have contained commodious apartments, with spacious fireplaces, &c. From this tower a line of communication, or terraced walk, runs inside the outer wall along the whole building, ascending by steps from tower to tower. In the old Norman keep this gallery used in like manner to run under arches round the whole inside. This being a thirteenth-century castle, where the defence consisted of numerous towers (it is said to have contained sixteen), the line of communication was altered accordingly.

The most lofty and interesting portion of Chepstow Castle is now called the chapel; but in castles the chapel was not usually the most striking object; and as this beautiful remain has apartments above, there is every reason to think that the lower part was not a chapel, but the grand hall, especially as an oriel window, in the style of the thirteenth century, and remarkably rich in its architectural decorations, still exists to confirm the supposition. A terrace and wall, on the very edge of the cliff, rendered this part impervious to missile weapons. Within the hall a range of niches are seen, usual in Norman keeps, and called, by presumption, seats for the guard or attendants.*

I next explored a damp and gloomy subterranean vault, with a groined roof and an aperture for the admission of the few rays of light that struggle through

* A priestly legend was given to the people, which invested this chapel with the character of extraordinary sanctity. It was related to have been erected by Longinus, a Jew, and father of the soldier who pierced the side of Christ. For some offence he was condemned to seek the shores of Britain, and erect a religious edifice on the river Wye.

the overhanging and entangled ivy and brushwood of the rock in which this dismal apartment is formed; on peering through the opening, the Wye is seen at a great depth below, rolling heavily along; and the head grows dizzy with gazing from the murky dungeon down the terrific precipice. If this were the prison, surely a brief sojourn in it ought to expiate even a weighty error. I looked at the ponderous rings in the rocky wall, and thought of the "Prisoner of Chillon," and then eagerly bounded up the foot-worn stair into light and liberty—heartily thankful that the years were for ever gone by, when feudal tyranny could incarcerate its wretched victims in such cruel durance.

This fortress seems to have been built by Roger de Bigod, about the same time as Tintern Abbey church. It underwent some partial alterations in the end of the fifteenth century, probably by William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, who was deeply engaged in the wars of York and Lancaster. The town was very strongly fortified, and the remains of its defences are still considerable. Leland, that veracious antiquary, thus describes it in his time:—"The towne of Chepstowe hath bene very stoutly waulled, as yet doth appere. The waulles began at the ende of the great bridge over Wye, and so came to the castle, the which yet standeth fayr and strong."

Several monastic and ecclesiastical remains may be found in the neighbourhood. The town occupies a pleasing situation, being built on a hill gradually ascending from the river, amid scenery of the grandest description, but contains few buildings worthy of notice except the castle. A cell of the foreign abbey of Cor-





neille existed here as early as the reign of Stephen. On the north side of the chapel of this priory are Roman bricks. The present parish church includes most of its remains, and forms a curious specimen of Norman architecture, particularly the western entrance. The old gate is an interesting piece of antiquity, but much injured by time.

The bridge over the Wye is substantial and elegant, consisting of five iron arches resting on stone piers. It is five hundred and thirty-two feet long; the centre arch is one hundred and ten feet, and the other two, on each side of it, seventy and fifty-four feet each in span. It has been remarked, that the tide rises higher here than in any other place in the kingdom—from fifty to sixty feet. The reason assigned is, that the rocks of Beachley and Aust, which project into the Severn immediately above the Wye, cause such an extraordinary swell that the stream is impelled up this river.

At Chepstow I went on board a steam-vessel for Bristol, with the intention of taking the packet from thence to Tenby the following morning. Proceeding steadily down the Wye, it was observable that the fair and clear mountain-stream had changed to a broad and stately river. Picturesque cliffs flank her course on the left, displaying a curiously-varied stratification, and crowned with overhanging wood. On the right, the gradually-rising ground soon exhibited the remains of the ancient town wall, or, as it is now called, the Port Wall, fortified by numerous round towers, on an apparently artificial elevation. Gliding smoothly on, in the golden light of an autumn afternoon (for my wanderings had now extended from spring to the first month

of that rich season of the year), I soon found the river widening rapidly, and recognising Aust cliffs, and the little ruined shrine of St. Tecla, on its island rock, I knew that the Wye here mingled her waves with those of her sister stream, the Severn.

I might finish my Wye explorations very fitly in the words of Mr. Gray:—"The very principal light and capital feature of my journey was the river Wye, which I descended in a boat for nearly forty miles, from Ross to Chepstow. Its banks are a succession of nameless beauties."

CHAPTER X.

TENBY—CARMARTHEN BAY—LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE—
LAMPHEY PALACE—MANORBEER CASTLE—OCEAN, ETC.

Old Ocean! how I love thy roar; it seems
To my attentive ear as though it sung
Of ancient days, and had grown hoarse with age.
The jargon of old Babel wand'ers has been
Beside thy waters. Thou hast caught the sound,
And speak'st all languages. In thy soft calm voice,
The whispering music from Idalian groves
Comes richly fraught with perfumed melody.
That earnest sigh, drawn from thy depths and caves,
Is vocal with the tale of wrecks,—as sad
As the last breath of gasping, drowning men,
Or stranded mariner, from some desert isle,
Sending his soul homeward. Thy stormy voice
Gathers the shout of hosts and multitudes
That erst have thronged thy shores. Thy rolling waves
Are a deep trackless path to distant lands;
And east and west, and north and south, are joined
By thee in fellowship, as one great family.

THE OLD BARD.

THE county of Pembroke pushes boldly forward in the form of a broad rugged promontory, on its western and northern sides, into the wide world of waters, touching easterly the counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen. The reader who has followed me from the pictured valleys and wood-crowned hills of the beautiful Wye, which the hand of man has so profusely deco-

rated, will find himself suddenly transported to a region of barrier rocks, standing like the Pillars of Hercules, with their bases lashed for ages by the storm-driven waves of the ocean.

At the south extremity of a small bay, offering an excellent roadstead for vessels, and situated some ten miles from the county town, stands the well-known watering-place of Tenby, "the boast of Pembrokeshire." Almost unrivalled for the beauty of its situation and the extent of its marine prospects, the town "peninsulateth," as Leland says, upon a bold but irregular pile of cliffs, rising above the sea—Caldy Island breaking the violence of the waves from the Atlantic Ocean. The far-extending view from the Castle Hill, looking easterly, embracing the whole of Carmarthen Bay, is carried forward to the Goskar Rock, and below it to what are termed the Norton Sands. Passing over numerous bays and promontories, the Monkstone Point next is seen; and then, again receding, the coast forms the bay of Sandisfoot. The summit of Amroth Castle, the waters of Llaugharne Bay, the mouth of the Towey, the pinnacles of Kidwelly Castle, and part of the town, are within range of the eye; and afar off the broad promontory of Gowerland, and the towering rock called the Wormshead, in the Bristol Channel, stretch away to the extreme point of vision.

Scarcely less magnificent the prospect opens towards the south, exhibiting St. Catharine's Rock, on which are the ruins of an antiquated building; Caldy Island, and that of St. Catharine, with the Bristol Channel; and occasionally, on fine days, parts of the Somersetshire coast. Giltar Point terminates the prospect to the west.



Cape Henry, View of Harbor, by J. M. W. Turner.

1845-1846



Although the architectural remains of the district are numerous, and convey to the traveller some idea of their ancient extent, but little is left entire of the old castle of Tenby; a single tower and some dilapidated walls being the only evidences of its former splendour. These ruins present a singular contrast to the neat pretty walks and seats formed on the surrounding rock for the accommodation of visitors, from which the expansive sea is beheld to great advantage, studded with fishing-boats and ships. Here strangers and residents hasten to watch the arrival and departure of steam-boats and other vessels. The church stands on an elevated part, nearly in the centre of the town, and is an ancient structure, with modern additions and improvements. The interior is rich in sepulchral sculpture, and other monumental records; amongst which is one in the north aisle to John Moore, of Moorhayes, Devon, who died for love:—

“He that from home for love was hither brought,
Is now brought home; thus God for him has wrought.”

A pilgrimage would doubtless be made to this tomb by all consumptive maidens, but for this droll circumstance, that he was the father of a large family—six sons and ten daughters,—which he had by his first wife, and he died here while in search of a second. The church has a tower and spire, esteemed the highest in Wales, which proves a useful landmark to the far-off mariner. From the hotel windows, when the weather is unpropitious, and the white-winged heralds of the storm hover in sight, or utter their warning cry, the visitor can still

console himself with contemplating the wide expanse of waters, now full of "sound and fury," raising their angry crests, and exhibiting the varying *phases* of the mighty ocean.

Nearly south-west of the town rise those wild masses of rock forming the island of St. Catharine, and more distant those of St. Margaret and Caldy. In all weathers the effect to the eye, with the Norton Sands, bounded by their majestic cliffs, is as varied as it is picturesque; the sands on the south and west offer spacious and romantic walks close to the rocks, nearly as far as the grand promontory of Giltar.

Of the style of living at Tenby, during the summer, I can speak in just terms of eulogy; but, as regards winter, the people of the neighbourhood, it is said, chiefly subsist upon codfish during the whole season. Even the fields are occasionally enriched with the same article, to render them more productive.* The women, in men's hats and jackets, assist in agricultural labour; and the country people understand the art of making good fires in their kitchens, which burn for a week together, with fuel that makes scarcely any smoke.

Ever since my little trip from Holyhead, along the northern coast of Anglesea, to view its grand marine caverns—the work of a thousand storms—and the no less singular appearance of the South Stack Light-house,† on its little rock below the mountain of Caer Gybi, where I spent some pleasant hours, I had not

* This place was a principal town of the Flemish settlers, and once boasted of most productive fishing-banks, which are now either lost or shifted.

† See "Roscoe's North Wales," p. 155.

ceased to watch an occasion for the enjoyment of another cruise, and this the fine expanse of Carmarthen Bay supplied to my heart's desire. Without loss of time I engaged a small yacht, and with a companion or two of my own mood, taking advantage of a gentle breeze, early one fine clear morning, we trimmed our sails and steered away for Llanstephan Castle, holding our course as near as convenient to the land, which enabled me to observe the different features of the coast, and then fetching a point or two to the south, we spread our canvas to the wind, and bore up right ahead for the old ruins. The weather was delightful, not a cloud dimmed "the blue serene," a delicious change to one long the denizen of smoky cities; and I could not but exclaim—

"This hour is lovely, as the morning beam
Dances o'er eastern rock, and hill, and stream;
This hour is lovely, as the sun's pure light
Bursts from the sea upon the ravish'd sight."

No wonder we are a nation of voyagers, fond of change and travel, and subduing all the elements with the necromancy of science to promote our objects. We are, indeed, the real conjurers who have dived deepest into the old black art of converting our baser metal into gold, and rendering earth and ocean alike tributary to the potent spell of industry and enterprise. There is, too, something like enchantment in sailing "o'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea," no one will deny; and that it is very like conjuring,—to say nothing of the glory of naval sovereignty, the thrilling pleasure of bounding from shore to shore and from

clime to clime,—in laying the products of all lands upon our own home-quays.

“Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
The exulting sense—the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way!”

Yet let no one condemn the homely joys of a little inland trip, with its variety of picturesque and sublime objects, and the rude health and feeling of joyous hilarity which, in spite of oneself, it will produce.

After making more than four hours' sail, we stood off opposite Ginst Point, between which and the coast near Llanishmael, those two noble rivers, the Taff and the Towey, roll their wedded streams into the broad blue bay. Directing our course next up the Towey, we had the Taff on the left, and were presently borne by the sheer strength of the tide within sight of the once-celebrated Castle of Llanstephan, finely situated on the brow of an elevated promontory. From its still bold dimensions, it must have been of commanding height, and breadth, and strength, and is supposed to have been erected in the year 1188. The chroniclers relate that it was besieged in 1145 by a large force of Normans, English, and Flemings, and defended bravely by Meredith ap Gruffyd. The besiegers were more numerous than the garrison, but the ready skill of Meredith baffled all their plans. An escalade was attempted, the ladders were placed, and the foemen filled every step to the summit, when the gallant commander, by the aid of some machines he had invented for the purpose, overthrew them all, and so distressed the enemy that they



THE GREAT SEA STORM. BY J. M. W. TURNER. 1823.

THE GREAT SEA STORM.

1823.



were compelled to make a hasty retreat, and finally to raise the siege. Standing upon its grass-grown and melancholy ruins, I beheld prospects spreading below me in all their primitive beauty and splendour; fresh and gay as in the early days of that crumbling and shapeless mass, within whose stately halls sat knights and ladies, and from whose flowery lattices they gazed forth upon the same ever-varying, inconstant sea,—the blue arch of heaven,—and all that earth held of beautiful, in river, mountain, headland, and bay,—the very same that I now descried, stretching away far as the Worm's Head; and on the other side, the arrowy bounding Towey, and portions of the district, with the same peculiar features, towards Carmarthen. The village of Llanstephan is pleasantly situated at the foot, and on the sides, of the beautiful hill, a little below the castle.

Intending, upon my route towards Pembroke, to visit the fine old Castle of Manorbier, and the interesting ruins of the episcopal Palace of Lamphey, I took the nearest track to the sea. I could thus indulge my native predilections, imbibed in boyhood upon the shores of the Mersey and the Dee, for coast scenery, and the variety of prospects afforded by the ocean. Proceeding about four miles to the village of Lidstip, which gives the name of Lidstip Haven to an adjoining bay, protected from the western blasts by a range of high land, I obtained a splendid panoramic view, embracing Giltar Point, Caldy Island, and the Bristol Channel, enlivened by vessels of all kinds passing up and down. It fully repaid me for the route I had taken, and presented an opportunity of examining the

different strata of the rocks in the immense stone-quarries, which here give employment to the greater part of the neighbouring population. From hence a pleasant walk, still affording picturesque views, brought me in about two miles to the dreary, and, I am sorry to add, dirty village of Manorbeer.

From the number of fragments, the "*disiecta membra*" of nobler edifices, strewn far around, the Manorbeer of other times would appear to have been much more extensive than at the present period. The ancient castle is seen beetling high over the sea, its massy walls remaining yet almost entire. It is situated, as described by Leland, "between two little hillettes," and is an extensive but irregular edifice, adapted for warlike times, and provided with apertures for the discharge of missile weapons, instead of windows, the light being admitted only from the inner court. In the old feudal style, the chief entrance was by a noble gateway, protected by a semicircular court with a large barbican, and strongly flanked with bastions. Its ponderous towers, and the extent of its site, still to be traced amidst a scene so wild and desolate, present a strange contrast to its by-gone days of power and splendour, and throw a savage, sombre air over the vicinity. Its size and position are truly grand; from whatever spot it is viewed, the observer cannot fail to be struck with its stately magnitude and air of dignity.*

* Dr Samuel Johnson says, in reference to these Cambrian fortresses, "one of the castles in Wales would contain all he had seen in Scotland." The ruins of Manorbeer give the most perfect idea of an old baronial establishment. It does not appear that it was ever the object of any hostile attack, and it ceased to be inhabited before the feudal age had passed away, or any changes had been made in its original architecture.

WATERBURY CASTLE



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W. H. H. H. H.



Here in the twelfth century was born the great historian of the Principality, Giraldus Silvester, commonly known by his patronymic of *Cambrensis*,—the secretary, adviser, and travelling companion of Archbishop Baldwyn,—one of the most active and intelligent ecclesiastics of his times; “a man,” as old Lamberde says, “wel learned, and as the tyme served, eloquent.” He visited Jerusalem, took a survey of Ireland, and wrote descriptions of the different countries over which he travelled. He was descended, on the maternal side, from Rhys ap Tewdwr, one of the princes of Wales. At an early age, evincing a taste for reading, he was removed to the residence of his uncle, the Bishop of St. David’s, who superintended his education. He then went to the continent, where he remained three years, and on his return to England, in 1172, took orders, and was soon after presented with the archdeaconry of St. David’s. At the decease of his uncle, the chapter elected Giraldus as his successor in that see; but Henry II. refused to ratify their choice, not thinking it prudent to raise a man of such talents and influence to the bench, who was allied with the princes of the country. After this repulse, Giraldus again visited France, and on his return was appointed one of the chaplains to the king, who committed to his care the education of his son John. During his residence in Ireland, he was offered two bishoprics, which, however, he refused; and in 1187 accompanied Archbishop Baldwyn to preach the crusade through Wales. Two years afterwards he attended King Henry to France, and, after his decease, was employed by Richard I. He refused the bishoprics of Bangor and

Landaff, having an eye on that of St. David's; but taking offence at repeated disappointments, he resigned his preferments, retired from public notice, and spent the remainder of his life in literary pursuits.

Giraldus thus describes his native place :—"The Castle of Maenorpyrr is distant about three miles from Penbroch. It is excellently well defended by turrets and bulwarks. On the right hand a rivulet of never-failing water flows through a valley, rendered sandy by the violence of the winds. * * * This country is well supplied with corn, sea-fish, and imported wines, and is tempered by a salubrious air. Demetia, therefore, with its seven cantreds, is the most beautiful, as well as the most powerful district of Wales; Penbroch, the finest province of Demetia; and the place I have just described, the most delightful part of Penbroch. It is evident, therefore, that Maenorpyrr is the paradise of all Wales." The author may be pardoned for having thus extolled his native soil, his genial territory, with a profusion of praise and admiration.

Fronting the south side, across a small dingle watered by the rivulet Giraldus refers to, which supplied the fishponds of the castle, is seen the church, upon an elevated slope, with its single tower. Under a plain canopy in the chancel is a tomb supporting the effigy of a crusader, clad in a mixture of ring and plate armour, such as was worn soon after the Conquest, having his shield charged with the arms of Barri, whose family formerly possessed the castle and its domain.

From the castle there are varied and extensive prospects, comprising the elegant mansion of Stackpole, the grand promontory beyond, called St. Govan's Head,

and the Bristol Channel. The mighty ocean rolls its resistless surges along Manorbeer Bay towards the main, and, breaking impetuously against the rocks below, mingles its sublime and eternal music with the wild seamew's cries, appealing to the eye and the imagination with more than ordinary power.

From this singularly wild and picturesque portion of the coast, I took my way through the villages of Jamestown and Hodgeston to the interesting ruins of Lamphey, hardly more than three miles from Pembroke. The remains of this once magnificent palace are situated in meadows, and some parts, not yet dilapidated, have been appropriated to ornament the approach to a more recently erected mansion, close to the ancient edifice. It is mentioned, that to Bishop Gower may be ascribed its grandeur and extent, as that part with the arched parapet (found also in his other buildings—the Palace of St. David's and Castle of Swansea), particularly characterizes his style. It owes something also to his successors, Adam Hoton, and Vaughan, the founder of that elegant chapel in the cathedral of St. David which goes by his name. In this palace dwelt Bishop Rawlins, who attended Sir Rhys ap Thomas in his tournament at Carew Castle. The licentious Barlow was the last bishop that resided here, of whom it is said by one of his own relations, "that he was the first Protestant bishop who, contrary to the canons of the apostles, violated his faith, assumed a wife, and being given to sensuality, drunkenness, and lasciviousness, broke his vows by contracting matrimony with a lady abbess." Old Fuller has preserved a curious epitaph on Agatha Wellsburn, the lady abbess who became the wife of the

bishop, found in one of the churches of Hampshire, which he thus translates :—

“Barlow's wife, Agatha, doth here remain,
Bishop, then exile ; bishop then again ;
So long she lived, so well her children sped,
She saw five bishops her five daughters wed.”

Once an episcopal palace belonging to the see of St. David, and subsequently a seat where the unfortunate earl of Essex spent his youth, and which he is said to have left “the most finished gentleman of his time,” these magnificent ruins appear in bolder relief from their association with the stirring times of their early history. Had Lamphey Palace been erected on an elevated site, the building would have appeared more majestic. The eastern window still exhibits the most elegant tracery ; and luxuriant ivy now adds to the picturesque appearance of the crumbling fabric. A gloomy and melancholy silence pervades the whole scene ; and ere long little will remain to show the outline of this extensive and costly pile.





W. J. L. S.

W. J. L. S.

CHAPTER XI.

PEMBROKE—STACKPOLE COURT—ST. GOVAN'S—
CAREW CASTLE, ETC.

And this was once the stately home
Of pleasant festival ;
Where gallant lords and ladies shone,
And knights in glittering mail ;
The "Feast of Shells" here brought the throng.
To revel and wassail.
The pomp and splendour have no sway
In this deserted scene,
Yet still the vanished leaves a ray,
To tell of what has been ;
And now the spirit of decay
Broods o'er the silent scene.

THE HIGHLAND CASTLE.

UPON a bold rocky eminence that projects into the estuary of Milford Haven stand the frowning ruins of Pembroke Castle,—the most extensive and magnificent, perhaps, as well as varied, of which the Principality can boast. Its grand imposing outline, with its numerous sides, bastions, and projections, incorporated, as they are, with precipitous and picturesque masses of rock, acquires bolder relief from the lofty site, and its skilful combination of old Norman architecture with the Gothic. The tower which overlooks the water, the entrance from the town, and the round tower, are all that remain in tolerable preservation. It was divided

into an inner and outer ward, in the former of which was the keep with the state apartments, formerly occupied, it is thought, by the countess of Richmond; in the latter are the different offices for the use of the garrison. From this ward the town was entered by a gateway defended by a semicircular barbican, and a dry ditch cut out of the solid rock. Connected with this part of the fortress is the "chambre where King Henry VII. was born," which old Leland describes as having "a chymmeney" containing the arms and badges of that monarch. In the basement story of this suite was the door that opened into the staircase leading to "the marvellus vault caullid the Hogan;" but it is now approached by a path carried along the verge of the castle rock. In Elizabeth's time this place is described as containing a copious spring of fine fresh water, but it is now choked up. This fortress, the chroniclers relate, was built by Arnulph de Montgomery in the time of Henry II., and on the disgrace of the Norman, passed into the hands of Gerald de Windsor, the king's lieutenant in those parts, on his marriage with Nest, sister of the reigning Welsh prince. The history of this lady forms an episode in the national annals. The report of her beauty and endowments inflamed the curiosity of the son of Cadwgan, prince of Powys, a youth of reckless courage and profligate manners. Under the pretext of a friendly visit, he was admitted into the castle, and became deeply enamoured of her. He returned home, but only to assemble a party of his "rake-hell companions," and on that same night secretly obtained entrance into the castle, and forcibly carried off this Helen of Wales. The

seducer paid dearly for his violation of the marriage sanctities, and was slain a few years afterwards by an arrow from the enraged husband. The ruins are seen, perhaps, to greatest advantage when approaching the place by water from Pennar Mouth.

Pembroke Castle was distinguished, at the period of the civil wars, by the gallant defence it made in favour of Charles, under the command of General Laugharne and Colonel Poyer. Cromwell was at last sent with a large force to reduce it; and though suffering at that time from the gout, he carried on the siege with such vigour, cutting off the supply of water to the garrison, that he at last succeeded in taking possession of the place. Laugharne, Poyer, and Powell, with two other officers, surrendered to the mercy of the Parliament. The army and munitions of war were delivered up to Cromwell, and the town was preserved from plunder. In April, 1649, a council of war passed sentence of death against Powell and Laugharne, as they had before done against Poyer; and Cromwell sent an order for them to draw lots to determine which of them should die. On two of these lots was written, "Life given by God;" the third was a blank. The prisoners, not willing to be the instruments of their own destiny, a child drew the lots, and the blank one falling on Poyer, he was shot in Covent Garden, "dying very penitently."

The town of Pembroke is advantageously situated on a branch of Milford Haven, which carries small vessels at high water up to the quay. Next to Carmarthen it is the most spacious and richest town in the western district of South Wales; but has not increased latterly

in wealth or population, in consequence of numerous removals to the new government settlement at Pater. It possesses a free school, some excellent inns, and a court-house. It has given the title of earl to several families, and, lastly, to that of the Herberts, in whom it still remains.

To the north, Pembroke is encompassed by a thick wall, flanked by numerous bastions, but on the south its remains are scarcely visible. It formerly possessed three handsome gates, "by east, west, and north," as old Leland quaintly describes it, "of the wiche the east gate is fairest and strongest, having a faire but compasid tour not rofed, in the entering whereof is a portcolys *ex solido ferro*." The north gate still presents a tolerably entire appearance.

Pembroke possesses two churches, dedicated to St. Michael and St. Mary; but they are not remarkable, either in their architecture or sepulchral decorations. The latter contains a mural tablet to Francis Parry, who married the daughter of Walter Cuney, at whose house Cromwell remained while he was suffering with the gout, and directing the siege of the castle. He died mayor of Pembroke, and the eulogy, consisting of fifteen lines, is expressed in such an affected strain, as to be quite ludicrous. It begins as follows:—

"Dan Phœbus mourning, Neptune's flowing tide
Deluged our streets when our Mæcenæ dy'd."

For the attractions of its castle alone, Pembroke is deserving of all commendation; and from the many pleasant excursions it affords, by land and water, is becoming a favourite place of resort with summer rambles from various parts. What in fine weather

can surpass a visit to Stackpole Court, the seat of Earl Cawdor—to the bluff promontory of St. Govan's Head—to Bosherton Meer, and, along the iron-bound coast, to those singular rocks called the Stacks—to Carew Castle—to the Government Dockyard at Pater—or a cruise through Pennar Mouth to Milford, or up the stream to Laurennny or Haverfordwest? And all these places are well worthy the attention of visitors.

Amongst the interesting places in this district, none is so well calculated to attract the wanderer's attention, and excite his patriotic feelings, as the Government Dockyard for building or repairing ships, on the margin of the Haven, two miles from Pembroke. I could not help observing the admirable arrangements of this establishment; and must not withhold my approbation of the orderly and efficient manner in which these extensive public works are conducted. This place is, as it were, one of the nurseries by which we maintain our national glory and importance. Here all is activity and bustle. On one side lay numerous blocks of oak of huge dimensions, intended to form our largest ships; on another, anchors of immense size, which probably might be destined to become the hopes of thousands of mariners in the hour of peril; on one hand, a stately ship ready to leave the stocks; on the other, the imperfect skeleton of one in progress. The whole establishment occupies a space of sixty-five acres, inclosed by a lofty wall, and contains the residence of the commissioner, besides houses for several officers, and also a church.

The village, called Pater, that has been springing up close to this noble work, has of late so far increased as

to bid fair, at no great distance of time, to become a more important place than its parent town. It possesses many advantages as a place of trade, particularly that of deep water at most periods of the tide. The mail from London now runs to Hobb's Point, instead of Milford; and the Post Office Packet for Waterford is brought up the Haven as far as the new village, in order to take in the bags. Here, too, is a splendid hotel, and a fine pier, both of recent construction, built by Government.

In my many wanderings through various lands, I have always found it advantageous to my purpose and amusement, to fix my head-quarters in some central place, or some district metropolis, and to diverge from thence in excursions, whether long or short, as might best suit my convenience. I have thus contrived to keep up the idea—and who does not love to cherish the idea?—of home. *My* home being now the crowded city, or the secluded hamlet—now the busy strand, or, not unfrequently, the solitary vessel in the wide ocean. According to this my practice, then, I called the hotel, in the long street of “ancient Penbroch,” my home during my brief sojourn in this district.

It was on one of those fine, rich autumn days, which, in the rural and well-wooded districts of Great Britain, make this the most delightful season of the year for a day's ramble, that I set off on an excursion to St. Govan's Head, and along the rocky coast which gives so bold and picturesque a character to the vicinity. Upon ascending the eminence outside of the town, I was delighted with the prospect opening around me, comprising Pembroke stretched at my feet, part of the

unruffled waters of Milford Haven, with its banks of pasture, and corn-land, and rich red soapy fallows, and a bold sweeping expanse bounded only by the horizon. I passed forward by St. Daniel's Church, a singular and picturesque old edifice, with its steeple partly covered with ivy; and proceeding farther to the still higher ground of Windmill Hill, I beheld a view on all sides yet more beautiful and extensive, with the town of Milford fairly made out, and a portion of Pater, relieved by the range of dusky hills on the other side of the Haven.

Having lingered for some time over this enchanting prospect, I pursued my way from this point through the wretched-looking village of Kingsfold, where the dirty hovels of the labourers form a painful contrast to the clean and neatly-thatched cottages of neighbouring England, and passed through a tolerably well-cultivated district to St. Petrox. The church, enveloped in a verdant shade of spreading trees, and the noble park of Stackpole Court, form the most interesting objects of attention. It is the air of quietness and repose resting upon it, which gives to a village churchyard its soothing and attractive character. The house of prayer for the living, rising amidst the memorials of the dead scattered all around, naturally originates a train of serious thought and reflection, casting over the mind a purifying influence. To a wanderer like myself, this last peaceful resting-place is always an object of peculiar and affecting interest, and I cast a lingering look upon the grey tower of this little sanctuary, as I bent my steps toward Stackpole Court. I was gratified by the permission of the noble owner to pass through the

spacious park belonging to this domain, by which I saved a distance of between two and three miles, and had the pleasure derived from contemplating the "old hereditary trees," with all those sylvan delights and solitudes, made vocal by the warbling of a thousand birds, the secret whispering of the leaves, slightly stirred by the soft breeze, and the deep shadows and recurring gleams of the wood's recesses, celebrated with so much enthusiasm by the poet Cowley.

It would be ungracious to pass by Stackpole Court without some description. The modern mansion, which is a superb building, stands upon the site of the old baronial residence belonging to this domain. Sir Elidur de Stackpole is written in the records as the original possessor, and is believed to have joined the crusade to the Holy Land at the time when Baldwyn and Giraldus made their tour through the country. The estate passed through various hands till it came into the family of Lort, and afterwards into that of Lord Cawdor, on his marriage with the heiress of the former house. In the civil wars, the old castellated residence was garrisoned for the king, and such was the massiveness of its walls, that it is said "the parliamentary ordnance did but little execution." The present edifice of wrought limestone rises beautifully at the foot of a sloping hill, in the sight of a spacious lake, the favourite resort of almost every species of wild fowl, and looks over a wide-extended park, along which herds of deer scamper in all the gladness of their nature. Skirting hills and rich plantations belt the domain on various sides, and beyond is the bright and boundless ocean. "One should think," said Boswell,

after looking over the grounds of Kedleston, in company with Dr. Johnson, "that the proprietor of all this *must* be happy." "Nay, sir," the sage replied, "all this excludes but one evil—poverty."

The carriage-road which passes through the park-gates commences at St. Petrox, and within a hundred yards from thence the broad expanse of the ocean almost suddenly breaks upon the view, here and there studded with white sails. From the same eminence a prospect is commanded over a considerable portion of the park. Every object around seemed invested with the calm, solemn peace of the dark majestic woods; not a cloud shadowed "the deep serene." The sun shone clear in mid-heaven; the music of myriads of insects arose above the whispers of the gentle wind amongst the leaves; the rooks hovered in wild concentric circles above my head, and the cattle in groups were seeking the coolness of the shade and stream. Nothing could surpass the variegated beauty of the foliage, and the rich contrast of colours between these ancient foresters, sacred from the woodman's touch, with their stems and branches partially exposed by the winds of autumn; the silver-barked birch, that "lady of the woods," gracefully dipping her bending branches in the clear waters, the shining ash, the smooth beech, the rough elm, the knotted moss-grown oak, blending together their rich dying hues of the year's decline, threw an ineffable charm over the whole landscape. On my right, and a little farther onwards, was an almost perfect solitude of trees, still in full leaf, whose branches meeting above quite shut out the sun's rays, except through casual openings. To the left again was a deep

dell, entirely covered with the hazel, the aspen, and the mountain ash, while the wild rose, the stretching blackberry, and that green parasite the ivy, filled up the vacant spaces under the overhanging boughs; so thick, indeed, were their intermingled leaves and branches, that a glimpse could scarcely be caught of the romantic stream which threads its way along the centre of this dell, till it reaches the sea, though its murmuring and rippling were continually breaking upon the ear. Here and there I perceived, scattered through the park, several extensive sheets of water, the margins covered with underwood and rushes.

The wanderer's track is not always, like the traveller's road, straight, measured, and macadamized; but, in lieu of this, it is—what pleases him a thousand times more—unconstrained and free, stretching onwards wherever his purpose, or the ever-varying mood of his mind may lead. When I had bid adieu to the magnificence and beauty of Stackpole Court, I struck off across the fields, and pursued my solitary way to Bosherton. The fragrance of the furze, which here grows luxuriantly, and was still richly in flower, quite perfumed the air; and fresh pictures of natural beauty and variety continually opened upon the eye as I passed on over the heathy moor. At length I reached the bluff promontory of St. Govan,* projecting his rocky head high above the sea; the scenery all around being precipitous, rocky, and wild. A flight of rude limestone steps, which are said to have the mystic property of

* The great display of scenery is at Sir Gawaine's Chapel and Head. This valiant knight has been transformed by popular error into a saint.—*Malkin*.

confounding all attempts to count them, leads to the ancient chapel. A little lower is a spring of clear bubbling water, encircled with brick-work, which is said to be miraculous in the cure of chronic and cutaneous diseases. Descending thence are some fragments of limestone, which, when struck with a stone, produce a sound like that of a bell. This, too, is a miracle, in this place of wonders, and is thus accounted for. A party of pirates happening to land on this spot, plundered the anchorite's chapel of its bell, and that the holy man might not be deprived of this help to his devotion, the sonorous property was communicated to the broken rocks it touched in the progress of its abduction. The fissure in the rocks, in which the little chapel is built, appears to have been produced by a violent convulsion of nature. This exposition, however, is too natural, and there is, as may be supposed, appended to it a tradition that has more of marvel in it. It is said, that it opened at first from the solid rock to shelter a saint pursued by his pagan persecutors, and after inclosing him till the chase was over, opened again to let him out, and was never afterwards closed. In confirmation, a place may be seen bearing a faint impression of the form of the saint. The prospect from this place is one of the most extensive and sublime I have ever beheld. Seated on the dry mossy turf above the terrific chasm, I indulged in contemplating the surrounding wildness, and the changing lights which danced upon the ocean. Out of the beaten road of tourists, at the farthest end, indeed, of the county, the tract of St. Govan, extreme in its loneliness, and almost unvisited by man, produced feelings and sensations in

unison with the extraordinary characteristics of the scene. The building is said to have been a hermitage, but it has more the appearance of a rude chapel than anything else. It would be quite a tempting retreat to a modern anchorite, had not the eternal law of change, in its whimsical caprices, made the friendless dweller in crowded cities not unfrequently the most solitary being on earth.

From the inner cove of the bay, on the sides of which the chapel stands, the vision, at first bounded by rocks of a thousand irregular forms, is then carried, in distant perspective, over the wide expanse of the boundless sea; but, in directing the eye along this iron-bound coast, vast caverns are discovered in the rocks, formed by the incessant action of the waves. In some instances, indeed, perforations have been made in the jutting rocks, through which, when the spirit of the western storm is raised, the ocean pours its rolling waters, and the wild winds howl and shriek in appalling frenzy.

The day was gloriously fine; the clear blue waters shone bright and smooth as a magnificent mirror far below me; the sun's rays painted the multiform aspect of the rocks in a thousand variegated hues, rich as the rainbow's tints. The seamews wheeled in airy circles; now dipping in their rapid flight their grey wings in the spray, now breasting the wave, as though the water was their only element. At every step, as I pursued my way along the bleak and craggy heights, myriads of these creatures were disturbed from their dizzy resting-places on the ledges of the rocks, and with wild and plaintive cries swept along my solitary path. In a short time I came to that fearful fissure in the cliffs,

called the Huntsman's Leap, of which tradition relates, that two huntsmen, coming upon it in full career, plunged over at a single bound.

A little beyond this is a singular place, called Bosherton Meer, formed by the perpetual force of the waves. It presents on the surface of the ground only a small aperture, which, like a winding funnel, gradually widens below until it spreads into an extensive vault open to the sea. In stormy weather, when the sea beats with violence against the rocks, the noise emitted from this aperture is awful, and occasionally large columns of spray are forced through it to an immense height. Small bays and creeks indented this undulating line of coast; and chasms and craggy rocks, inhabited by cormorants, razorbills, and gulls, continually intersected my progress, until I reached the land opposite the two lofty insular rocks called the Stacks. The harsh and discordant notes of that singular bird the eligug, a species of auk, soon announced that I had intruded upon their favourite haunts, and disturbed "their ancient solitary reign." From time immemorial, this peculiar tribe has been the tenant of these lonely rocks. Its members are wayfarers from a distant land. They hold no communion with other tribes of the feathered race, and seldom settle upon any other part of the coast. Sailing over these stormy towers they look upon that narrow neck of land, where once stood the camp of the Scandinavian pirate, from whose little bay, apparently scooped out of the rock, he was accustomed to push off his adventurous bark on perilous enterprises.* Rising

* The entrance to this camp was by a winding ascent up the sloping rocks. The ramparts stretched to the other side of the isthmus,

in clouds above my head, they almost darkened the air, uttering screams of such peculiar discord, that I was glad to pursue my way, taking the path through Warren, Stem Bridge, and passing by the estate of Orielson, the seat of Sir John Owen. I was much delighted by the contrast which this fine fertile country presents to the bleak savage character of the coast scenes I had just left, and by the varied images of beauty and repose which were now spread around me.

Having recovered from the fatigue of my former ramble, I took the advantage of a calm serene day to make my intended excursion to Carew Castle. Magnificent in its ruins, the vast dimensions of this lordly monument of heroic days cover part of a slight elevation of land on the most easterly arm of the haven of Milford. The noble apartments which surrounded a quadrangle, with an immense bastion at each corner, the grand gateway leading into a spacious court, and some magnificent windows, are still to be seen as the remains of this splendid structure.

The castle is situated at a short distance from the village of Carew ; and the appearance of its vast roofless walls, still presenting a broad bulwark to the shocks of time, is at once solemn and sublime. Two immense trees, having their trunks within the fortress, send forth huge feelers, which seem to climb with redoubled strength amid the spreading devastations of ages—crowning the topmost points—disguising the yawning gaps, made in the struggle of years, and throwing

where the precipitous cliffs furnished a sufficient defence. In this place is a fearful aperture,—the Cauldron,—which is connected with the sea at the bottom by two natural arches in the rocks.



THE CASTLE OF ST. JOHN



freshness and beauty around decay. The north view of this edifice, which the pencil and the graver have so graphically represented, conveys, perhaps, the best idea of its original grandeur and extent; the walls on the south having been destroyed by that great leveller of strongholds, Oliver Cromwell.

A few of the apartments are yet in a great measure entire; among these is the great banqueting-hall, of regal capaciousness, in earlier days the seat of feudal pomp and magnificent hospitality. Three ancient coats of arms still decorate the entrance. The splendid state-room, too, of still greater dimensions, in which there are yet remains of elegant marble cornices, and fireplaces with Corinthian columns, rich in device and exquisite in workmanship, is now tenanted by birds of prey. Silence reigns in these halls; not that of repose, but of utter desolation and irremediable ruin—a silence deep and unbroken, save from the footfall of the solitary traveller.

Carew Castle—formerly the residence of a Welsh prince and a long line of regal and lordly lineage, also part of the portion of the beautiful Nest on her marriage with Gerald de Windsor—in its high and palmy days, transcended most of its feudal contemporaries; its courts and halls have been thronged with gallant knights and their retainers, and made vocal with the minstrelsy of that heroic age; its tapestried rooms have entertained the fairest dames of Cambria, in those days of love and chivalry, and have echoed to the *chanson amoureux* of the wayward troubadour; and many a palmer has held his audience in breathless wonder, as he told the marvellous tales of his weary wanderings in

foreign lands. High and festal days has Carew Castle seen, when royal visitors, in long succession, were entertained within its walls. Various, indeed, has been the fate of this stronghold of feudal power. Carew Castle has borne the stern brunt of ruthless war—it has suffered many a protracted siege—it has heard the lament of many a solitary prisoner in its *donjon*, and witnessed many a secret or open deed of blood. But gallant knights, and fair dames, and merry minstrels, and mysterious pilgrims, have all vanished, like the visions in Banquo's glass, and lone and grass-grown courts and crumbling walls, and scattered fragments, with the scroll of the veritable chronicler, alone remain to tell that such things were.

This structure appears to be of different ages. According to Leland, it was remodelled and enlarged by Sir Rhys ap Thomas. On the south side it opened upon a handsome and extensive deer-park. In part of this ground the same knight held a special tournament, with other warlike games and pastimes, in honour of St. George, for the entertainment of Henry VII., when on his route to Bosworth field, to which came men of "prime ranke" from all parts. "This festivall and time of jollitie continued the space of five dayes," as the historian relates, and "tentes and pavillions were pitched in the parke, neere to the castle," for the spectators of these "rare solemnities, wheare they quartered all the time, everie man according to his qualities."

Near the entrance to the lawn, in front of the castle, just on the road-side leading to Carew church and village, stands one of the early crosses, in the centre of which is an elaborate inscription that cannot now be deciphered.





CHAPTER XII.

MILFORD HAVEN—MILFORD—HAVERFORDWEST—
FISHGUARD—CARDIGAN.

Wave after wave,
If such they might be called, dashed as in sport,
Not anger, with the pebbles on the beach,
Making wild music, and far westward caught
The sunbeam ; where, alone and as entranced,
Counting the hours, the fisher in his skiff
Lay with his circular and dotted line
On the bright waters.—ROGERS.

THE next morning after returning from Carew to Pembroke, I hired a boat from the latter place, intending, in company with a friend, to cruise about the Haven during the day, and to take up my quarters at Milford in the evening. Upon clearing a little way off Pembroke, the waters of what may be called the southern arm of Milford Haven became enlarged, stretching in parts a mile across, and having the appearance of an extensive lake encircled by rising ground—the outlet of this great body of water, at the straits called Pennar Mouth, not being more than two hundred yards broad. Here the tide of course runs with great rapidity either up or down ; and boats cannot readily work against the power of the stream.

Leaving behind us the Pennar heights, and entering

a wider expanse of water, I beheld the far-famed Milford Haven, with its boundaries endlessly varied, and alive with vessels of various size and character in every attitude, interspersed with fishing-boats and skiffs moving about in all directions. Although there is a dreary bleakness about the hills surrounding the Haven, yet a scene more lovely and striking can hardly be imagined. In some parts the banks are pleasingly diversified, particularly towards Laurennny, where the scenery is richly wooded, and along the foot of the river extending to Slebech on the east and Bolston on the west. This noble sheet of water is about twelve miles long, varying from two to three in breadth, and is sufficiently capacious to hold at anchor all the navy of Great Britain.

The town of Milford is agreeably situated on a point of high land with a gentle slope towards the water, from which it has a very imposing effect. Some twenty or thirty years ago it bid fair to become one of our principal marts of commerce—it grew important and full of business, and of wealth too; but the turn of the tide could not be more rapid than its decline from its former prosperity.

There now appears to be a stagnation of every thing like trade, which is chiefly attributable to the removal of the Government Dockyard, together with many hundred men, higher up the Haven. With it, the old commerce seems also to have taken its departure for ever; for inquiringly as I looked about me, I could not catch the sight of a single trader belonging to the place. To complete its desertion, the postmaster-general has ordered the steam-packet for Waterford

to be brought up the stream as far as Pater; so that the mail coach now drives to Hobb's Point instead of Milford, saving thereby a distance of about five miles.

"A Visitor" has a strange sound to the Milford people; he is looked upon as a foreigner, whose now-and-then appearance serves to keep alive public curiosity; this is particularly the case with the innkeeper, who holds the hotel, I understood, without paying any rent, solely to keep it from falling into decay. Poor man! Nothing can exceed the disconsolate air of his establishment; and his only gratifying reflection is in a retrospect of former times, and the mournful consolation that "it was not always so." That which old Lambarde wrote of Milford some centuries ago, might now pass current for a description of its present state. "A great haven in Wales," says he, "whereof I finde no other notable thinge, but that King Henry VII. aided by his friendes for the recoverie of hys righte, landed here, what time he came to fighte with Richard the Thyarde, usurper of the crowne, in which attempt he had prosperous success."

The only stirring event that marked my visit to Milford, was the destruction by fire of a large foreign ship, which had put in a short time previously for some repairs; and it was certainly a glorious sight, however much to be deplored. She burst into flames at midnight, and was consumed to the water's edge. I was aroused in the dead of night, when all around was wrapt in darkness; the sudden, terrific contrast was, indeed, grand and appalling. To behold the sea illumined with the blaze—the rolling waves resembling masses of moving fire, red as a lake of blood—the

crashing of the masts as they fell one by one—with the eagerness of the whole place to lend assistance, or their gathering in groups to gaze upon the magnificent spectacle, was awfully picturesque, and as interesting as it was terrible.

From Milford I forthwith bent my course towards Haverfordwest, Fishguard, and Cardigan. On reaching the summit of the hill near Stainton,* the retrospect is exceedingly agreeable, comprising the broad part of the noble harbour of Milford, and the opposite promontories of Angle and St. Ann's Head. About two miles to the right of the road is Rô's Market, a small village lying on the edge of a cheerful vale, where once stood the mansion of Sir Richard Walter, whose daughter was the mistress of Charles II. and the mother of the unfortunate duke of Monmouth. In this place was born Dr. Zachary Williams, the father of the blind lady for so many years the companion of the celebrated Dr. Johnson. Pressing onward by the village of Johnston, formerly the seat of Lord Kensington, over Pope Hill, and passing Haroldstone, St. Ismael's, where once was the cell of a saint of that name, I crossed Mawdlen's Bridge, and soon found myself within the town of Haverfordwest.

This place is one of the largest and most prosperous towns in Pembrokeshire. It is favourably situated for

* Adam de Stainton was the first Roman or Flemish lord of this place, and, it is believed, founded the church. The steeple, in the civil wars, was garrisoned by twenty musketeers, and preserved as a place of observation. Sir William James, who was the son of a miller in the neighbourhood, and who afterwards rose to the rank of commodore in the navy, and governor of Greenwich Hospital, received his education at the school of this place.

trade on the river Cleddy, which communicates with the sea at Milford Haven; but in itself it is uninteresting, both from its narrow zigzag streets and the dull inanimate appearance of its inhabitants. It has, however, a respectable air at a distance, and, perhaps, the best view of it is from the road leading to Fishguard. It was once the capital of the Flemish colony, settled in the district of Roos, which became from that circumstance the cradle of the woollen manufactory of England. "Theise Flemynges," as old Lambarde writes, "weare not welcome to the Welshmen; but for all that they pyked out a lyvinge amongst them, and weare, as it should seme, the first that exercised the misterie of drapinge within that quarter." The remains of the old castle, which was anciently a formidable fortress, built in the reign of Stephen, have been converted into the county gaol. On the outside of the town may be seen what yet remains of the Priory of Black Canons, once a building of considerable extent.

From this point, if the traveller be desirous of a pleasant walk of about four miles, and should have the industry to take it, he may find himself seated in the park belonging to Picton Castle; and, on casting his eye over the beautiful intermixture of umbrageous verdure, green and level lawns, and fertile fields, which compose the surrounding scenery, he will not regret the labour. The castle has many associations which render it an object of great interest. It is connected with the lawless times of William II., when the arbitrary will of the sovereign constituted the authority, and military power and violence the means, of forcible

and unjust possession. Its mixed architecture bears the traces of its transition from the almost impregnable strength of a ruthless age, to the elegant and convenient domestic arrangements of more secure and peaceful days. It is built in the centre of the domain, and commands a view of the confluence of two fine streams, which roll their clear bright waters into the Haven. There is one circumstance which is peculiar to this edifice, especially when it is contrasted with the changes and desolation of most of the great buildings of this eventful country, which I shall give in the words of Mr. Fenton, who speaks of it as "a castle never forfeited, never deserted, never vacant, that never knew a melancholy blank in its want of a master; which had always the good fortune to be inhabited by lords of its own, men eminent in their day as warriors, as statesmen, and as Christians; from whose walls hospitality was never exiled, and whose governors might be said to have been hereditary. A castle in the midst of possessions and forests coeval with itself, and proudly looking over a spacious domain to an inland sea, bounding its property and its prospects beyond them, for such is Picton Castle."

I left the park by the richly-wooded path leading to Slebech, where once stood a commandery, belonging to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. The church of this place, which is, perhaps, coexistent with the institution, contains some monuments and sculptured effigies which will detain the curious antiquary. The present mansion of Slebech is an elegant edifice, built on the site of the old commandery, and looks upon the beautiful river as did the fortress of the

knights. I left Slebech with regret; for its historical associations, woodland beauties, and autumn loveliness, had taken possession of my mind and heart; and having regained the high road, I arrived in the afternoon at the village of Robeston Wathen, in the neat inn of which place, as the rain had begun to fall in torrents, I determined on taking up my quarters during the night. For a road-side *hostelrie* I found in it more appliances of comfort than I had expected, and mine host was active in his civilities. But it had other and more intellectual claims upon my notice; for in travelling, whether far or near, I quite agree with one of the most delightful writers of our age,* that "we multiply events, and that innocently. We set out, as it were, on our adventures; and many are those that occur to us, morning, noon, and night. The day we come to a place which we have long heard and read of, is an era in our lives; and from that moment the very name calls up a picture." And so it was with me. I met in "the inn's best room" an agreeable and intellectual companion—one whose profession was connected with all that is refined and liberal. He was a painter. He had followed the same wild coast-path as myself. He had seen the winged watchers on the Stacks, and stood on the bold jutting promontory of St. Govan, looking out upon that broad ocean, whose ever-rolling waves fitly suggest the idea of eternity. He had, like me, struck off from the stormy scenes of savage nature, with her stern rocks and foaming billows, to luxuriate in her peaceful smiles, as she hushed and cradled the winds in the rich glens and valleys of this picturesque

* Samuel Rogers.

county. We compared our pictures, not our graphic or caligraphic ones, but those original paintings traced on the clear fluid of the vision, and then transferred in all their richness to the memory, as their receding lines vanished before the advancing forms of another and yet another, still more sublime and lovely than the first. It was but an instantaneous mental act to summon from their secret storehouse picture after picture, and to expatiate again and again upon their surpassing beauties and sublimities; revelling in this interchange of thought and fancy, with emotions as fresh and rich as those with which they were first seen. This was an evening in my changeful life that I shall long remember.

Early the following morning I parted from my pleasant friend, never, perhaps, to see him again, and bent my way across the country to Fishguard. On gaining an eminence at a short distance, I rested to watch the sun breaking in all his splendour over the woody ridge of old Llewthaden; his first rays resting on the hoary ruins of its castle.* Bright and glowing were his beams as they played, almost in mockery, upon this ancient heritage of the mitred lords of St. David's. The ivy had wreathed itself in uncontrolled luxuriance round the solitary tower that remains of this once massy pile, flaunting with the air of undisputed possession, and covering by its thick and spreading leaves the destructive progress of ages;

"All green and wildly fresh without, but grey and worn beneath."

* This castle constitutes the *caput baroniae*, by virtue of which the bishop of St. David's sits in Parliament. It was built by Bishop Becke,

Below it lay the fine valley of Tal y Bont, with its mansion, through which the river Cleddau, rapid, deep, and clear, pursues its onward course to meet the majestic tide of Milford. Nothing could exceed the lovely composition of this scene, the venerable remains of the castellated palace,—the wood-crowned steep, clothed in the rich and varied hues of autumn,—the narrow green vale with its little church,—the bridge stretching its architectural proportions across the playful waters, all harmonized and mellowed by situation and distance, and animated with the exhilarating influences of the fresh morning breeze. Passing next through Clarbeston and Spittal, I came to the high road towards Fishguard, near Leweston mountain; but the remainder of the route was tame and uninteresting. It was quite a contrast to the valley scene of Tal y Bont. Scarcely a wood, a hill, or a river presented itself to relieve the dull monotony; and in one part I went miles together almost without passing a single habitation.

The town of Fishguard is chiefly built upon a steep rock on the northern part of Pembrokeshire, which is washed by the waters of St. George's Channel. It possesses an extensive bay and harbour, sweeping for three miles in form of a crescent, having the bold promontory of Dinas on the north-east, and the huge wedged-shaped headland of Penanglâs on the north-west. From its depth of water, a pier might readily be formed which would afford shelter for vessels

enlarged and ornamented by Bishops Hoton and Vaughan, and dismantled by Bishop Barlow, and its materials sold by that avaricious prelate.

passing up and down the Channel, in the frequent storms peculiar to this coast.

Although the town wears a pleasing and rather interesting aspect from the beach, yet it possesses few well-built houses; which, perhaps, explains the reason why Fishguard is not resorted to for sea-bathing. From the number of people I met of very advanced age, I should judge the air to be very salubrious; and in this respect I believe it resembles most places situated on an eminence above the sea. Notwithstanding the want of fashionable recommendation, there is a constant succession of objects calculated to interest the visitor, especially in the vessels passing along the Channel, and the number of fishing-boats and other small craft entering and leaving the bay.

Taking advantage of a fine afternoon, I set out upon a walk of some four miles, through the village of Llanwnda to Goodwick Beach, where, at a place called Aber-y-felin, a descent was made by the French under General Tate, on the 20th February, 1797. The singular clearness and serenity of the day had tempted the good people of Fishguard to the beach, when three large vessels were discovered standing in from the Channel, and nearing the rocky coast of Llanwnda, which by the inhabitants at first were taken for Liverpool merchantmen becalmed, and coming to an anchor to wait the return of the tide or a brisker gale; but a most serious alarm was excited, when boats were seen putting off full of men, in such rapid succession as to leave no doubt of their being an enemy, which, late in the evening, was confirmed by their actually having begun to disembark, a service that was not completed

till midnight. The inhabitants more immediately within reach, for the most part deserted their houses, and took refuge in the rocks and thick furze. The town of Fishguard, and its vicinity, though a little farther off, caught the general panic; and the inhabitants effected the removal of their wives, children, and most valuable articles for greater security into the interior.

The French, after the labour of landing their ammunition, abandoned themselves to plunder the neighbouring dwellings and indulged in every kind of brutal excess, till they became so intoxicated as to be utterly insubordinate, and incapable of control by their officers. In the mean time the tocsin was sounded; the troops in the immediate neighbourhood were assembled, and by the morning light crowds of Welsh women in their red cloaks, with their usual curiosity, crowned the surrounding heights. Tate, seeing the state of his own troops, and taking the red cloaks for a gallant army ready to pounce upon him, sent forward a flag of truce, and agreed to an unconditional surrender.

Wanderer as I am along the highways and by-ways of many lands, and though my track is often as wayward as my mood may be, albeit there is still some method in my wanderings, which the gentle reader will not fail to discover, if he be but careful to follow assiduously upon my steps. In this way it was that I took the path coastwise in the direction of Newport, placing before me, as the ultimate object of my present excursion, Cardigan, and the interesting scenes upon the lower part of that fine river, the Teivy,—gathering

up, by the way, the rich associations of by-gone days, which almost cluster upon these green spots of early romance.

Has the traveller ever found himself alone on some unfrequented path, amidst the everlasting hills and bold gigantic forms of primeval nature, shaped and fashioned, it may be, in some sense, by the slow wear of almost unnumbered ages,—surrounded at the same instant, by the memorials of time, decaying and ruined in its lapses, though exhibiting in their massy remains a purpose of perpetuity, as if to emulate her enduring power?—and has he, also, in connection with such scenes, unfettered his imagination, and directed it to accompany the march of events that have been traced by the pen of some faithful chronicler, with which he has enriched his memory? Then has the traveller known something of the strange, fitful, melancholy, and richly sensitive emotions of the Wanderer as he trod the path he is now describing.

On my right rose the huge mountain range of the Perselly, with the Vrenny Vawr, stretching to the east, as its extreme outpost, looking inland, and far over the neighbouring counties of Carmarthen and Cardigan; while Carn Englyn, like a giant, on its western point, frowns from his rocky summit upon the open sea, having within his range the bold promontory of Dinas Head, and the fine bays of Newport and Fishguard, with the rich valleys of Nevern and the Gwayn. Between these distant mountains, in a receding line, and towering to a still greater height, stands another stupendous ridge, like a broad battalion, connecting its van and rear guard, over which human

industry has constructed a road, that opens a direct communication from Cardigan to the port of Milford.

As I stood on the high land of the coast, the scene was full before me, invested with all the interest belonging to its real facts and marvels. Centuries have passed away since the first lord of Cemaes, a Norman adventurer, anchored in the clear calm bay of Fishguard, then a little fishing village, known by the name of Abergwayn, and afterwards won by his good sword the first independent territory from the ancient princes of Wales. The little height of Cronllwyn, on the western side of the great Perselly range, marks the insulated spot where the daring invader in defiance unfurled his standard. His onward course was the mountain pass, disputed with fearful obstinacy by the men of Morvill; but victory was with the Norman; he crossed the highest ridge with his long line of martial followers, and on a heathy plain,—“the upland of the aimless bow,”—at the foot of the pass of Bwlchgwynt, the terrified inhabitants, dismayed by the number and force of his military array, laid down their arms, unstrung their bows, and submitted to him as a conqueror.

Not far distant stood the Castle of Newport, now desolate in its ruins, which was built by the Norman, and became the chief baronial residence of the first Lord Marcher. Its deep moat, its grand gateway, its fallen towers, and its ample remains, attest the former strength of the place, and the architecture of the age in which it reared its proud head. Behind it rises boldly the mountain of Carn Englyn, while before it spreads the beautiful bay, flanked by the headlands of

Dinas and Ceibwr. Newport, with its little port at the mouth of the Nevern, is now a straggling town, meanly built. It was "auncyently termed Abernever," as old Leland says, "and to the custodie whereof William the Conquerowr deputed one Marten of Tyron." It now presents a painful contrast to its former power and importance. This place is little deserving of remark, except for the extraordinary cromlech of Pentre Evan, and the great number of Druidical remains that enrich its neighbourhood.

I pursued my way to Cardigan, the capital of the county, which stands on the northern bank of the Teivy, at the edge of a province called, in early times, the Red Valley. One of the finest rivers in the Principality, rising in the summit of the mountainous region to the north-east, the Teivy, flows with almost unequalled grandeur into the capacious bay. Over the river is an ancient stone bridge of seven arches, and at one end a building in which, it is reported, Giraldus preached the crusade. Cardigan Castle, built in the reign of Henry II., was of considerable size and strength. Few fortresses have undergone greater vicissitudes than this. Raised in a lawless age, it has passed into the possession of successive masters, as fraud or violence gave to each the superiority. Its walls have been by turns manned and assailed by Normans, English, and Welsh; and the bow, the javelin, the battle-axe, and the cannon, have each done the work of destruction, both in its attack and defence.

The war-cry of many nations has been raised from its lofty towers; and the peaceful stream of the Teivy, that washed its massy walls in the day of its strength, and was often stained with the blood of hostile comba-



Old Ship, Old Ship, Old Ship.

(17)

tants, now rolls its silent tide, in an undisturbed current, by its ruins. Nor has this celebrated fortress been the scene of contest and violence alone. It has had its high and solemn days of festivity and regal magnificence, and the splendid entertainment of Cadwgan ranks amongst the most distinguished of that early age of feudal hospitality, of minstrelsy and song. Its power and existence, however, terminated in the civil wars, at which time it was held in the name of the king, but yielded at last, like many others, to the bravery and perseverance of the Parliamentary forces under General Langhorne.*

Fixing Cardigan as my head-quarters for a few days, I had some pleasant opportunities of making aquatic excursions upon the beautiful river Teivy, sailing up or down as the scenery invited, or my fancy might lead me; and occasionally leaving my little bark on the stream, and rambling, in all the ecstasy of invigorated spirits, along its sinuous and ever-varied banks. This is an unfrequented district by the ordinary tourist, because apparently a little diverging from the usual

* This castle derives a more modern celebrity from having been the residence of Mrs. Catherine Phillips, a poet of Jeremy Taylor's days, and the lady for whom, under the fanciful name of Orinda, that excellent man long maintained a friendship. She is supposed by Bishop Heber to have been the author of a whimsical treatise on "Artificial Handsomeness," erroneously attributed to the divine; which is nothing more or less than a "formal defence of painting the face," and anointing the brows with "ceruse and antimony." To this lady Taylor addressed his "Discourse on Friendship,"—and for which, in return, she styles him, in one of her poems, the "noble Palæmon." This lady was the regular blue-stocking of the day, and was celebrated by all the wits of her age. Cowley wrote an elegy on her death, which, like most of the set poems of that time, is full of odd conceits and far-fetched allusions.

track, but to me a more inviting one from that circumstance. The Teivy, which is the barrier river between the counties of Pembroke and Cardigan, presents, at every turn in its devious course, the peculiar beauties of both; and is, as Giraldus says, "stoared withe salmon and otter above al the ryvers in Wales." At one time it winds its silent way between the hills, filling the intervening space with its clear deep waters,—except, indeed, where sometimes a narrow path is saved, seemingly to entice the foot of the delighted passenger,—its high and sloping banks covered with trees of the richest verdure, now gracefully dipping their pendent branches in the stream, or bristling on the summit in the stately forms of the fir and pine,—and then again, as if rejoicing at its escape from such seclusion; sending its laughing tide through many a richly-wooded and romantic dale, in full career to the main.

Unmooring my boat at Cardigan, I pulled into the current of the stream, and soon reached that part where the river becomes contracted, gliding amongst rocky eminences, which rise on either side, occasionally broken into broad and picturesque masses, and as often relieved and insulated by intervening quarries and openings. The passage of the river discloses a continued variety of objects: not a few of the reaches, which its perpetual windings afford, are eminently beautiful. In many parts the course of the stream fades from the eye, and the little vessel glides gently forward as on the bosom of a lake, while its beauty offers a combination of rock and foliage, of quarry, level green, and many-coloured mosses, in constant and gratifying succession, throwing a singular air of loveliness and repose over the whole scene.





View of the
Great Gorge, N. H.

CHAPTER XIII.

KILGARRAN—CARMARTHEN—VALE OF THE TOWEY—
LLANDILO—KIDWELLY.

"If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget—
If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep
Thy heart from fainting, and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills!—no tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears."

At a distance of five miles from Cardigan, immediately following a graceful bend of the river, the noble Castle of Kilgarran bursts suddenly on the view. It was evening when I first saw this stupendous pile of interesting ruins. The moon shone with unequalled beauty and clearness. My bark lay silently upon the tranquil stream, under the shadow of two projecting capes, on one of which, rising perpendicularly from the bed of the river, the castle once stood in commanding majesty; but now in solitude, sadness, and desolation. As I gazed upon it, my mind ran over the stirring events associated with its history, and recalled its localities, with which from description I had become familiar. There were the frowning bastions and curtain walls, built on a line with the foundation-rock, seeming to grow from their base, as if to defy with it the ravages

of time and the enemy. On the east, deep ravines, fretted by the mountain torrents in their headlong course to the Teivy, had insulated it from the surrounding high land. On the west, lay the winding path which connected the peaceful village of Kilgarran with the castle, and its five ample entrances. Within, ward after ward, of various extents, involving the keep and all the state apartments, displayed the massy strength and magnificent dimensions of this once-famous fortress. Its history marks the insecurity and vicissitudes of a state of society in which right is made to yield to the force of arbitrary power. English, Welsh, Norman, and Flemish masters, had successively shared in its possession; and warriors, of all these tribes, poured from its open gates, on expeditions of war and conquest; or had presented their serried and devoted lines in its protracted and obstinate defence. All was now hushed. These busy and tumultuous generations slept with their fathers, and left this scene to be contemplated by a solitary traveller, like myself, under the influence of feelings and reflections such as these sad memorials were peculiarly fitted to inspire. I would say of Kilgarran Castle, to the reader, as the northern Magician has sung of the celebrated abbey in his native land, in these lines:—

“If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight.”*

Adjoining the little village of Kilgarran was the resi-

* It is said that the great painter Wilson has introduced the fine eminence on which Kilgarran stands, into his picture of Niobe, and the peculiar beauties of this spot into several of his masterly productions.





THE GREAT FALLS OF THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER

After Howard's Painting

dence of the learned Dr. Thomas Phayer, the translator of Virgil's *Æneid*, "a man," as the antiquary George Owen says, "honoured for his learninge, commended for his governmente, and beloved for his pleasante natural conceiptes." The scene of Warton's poem of King Arthur's Grave is laid in the Castle of Kilgarran, where it is supposed to have been sung by one of the Welsh bards to Henry II., on the occasion of a high festival, before that monarch sailed on his expedition to Ireland, to suppress the rebellion of the king of Connaught.

"Stately the feast, and high the cheer;
Girt with many an armed peer,
And canopied with golden pall,
Amid Kilgarran's castle hall,
Sublime in formidable state,
And warlike splendour, Henry sate."

Two or three miles from Kilgarran is the pleasant village of Kenarth, near which there is a romantic fall of the Teivy, forming a salmon-leap, over a ledge of rocks of considerable height. From the bridge over the noisy stream, is an interesting though secluded panoramic view, comprising the river, a picturesque water-mill, and the church and village of Kenarth. The bold, dark foreground beautifully reflects itself in the shining waters. The gently-swelling hills, gradually receding from the sight, mingle their blue summits with the sky. The richly-variegated rocks, the quiet green paths winding along the river, the clamorous water-fowl wheeling about in restless eddies, the retreats of peaceful seclusion, all combine to give to this scene, when beheld in the fading light, features of wildness and

beauty which cannot fail to produce a delightful impression on the mind.

Evening was beginning to spread her misty veil over the scene, as the Wanderer entered the little town of Newcastle Emlyn, intending to proceed onwards the following morning, and make Carmarthen his temporary home for a few days. Newcastle Emlyn is so connected with the borough of Adpar, in Cardiganshire, that they are usually considered as one town. They stand on either side of the Teivy,—Newcastle on the south, Adpar on the north bank; and bending with the river, form an irregular street about one mile in length. Newcastle had a Roman origin, as old Camden supposes, and was anciently called Dinas Emlyn, or the city of Emlyn; but took its more recent name from the new castle, built by Sir Rhys ap Thomas, upon the site of the old fortress.* It was evening, as I said, when, following the course of the Teivy, I entered this sequestered little place, occupying, as it does, only one of its delightful banks, and looking with friendly regard upon its opposite neighbour, the borough. The sun had sunk

* A singular piece of treachery and retribution occurred in connection with this place. During a truce between King Henry of England and Llewelyn, prince of Wales, commissioners were appointed to meet at Emlyn, to negotiate a peace. Patrick de Canton, the king's lieutenant, while on his journey thither, "learning that his own followers were more numerous than those of the Welsh deputies, laid a plan for their destruction, and attacked them with great violence while they were wholly unsuspecting of hostilities, and unprepared for defence. Several of their men were slain, and the chieftains themselves escaped with great difficulty. David, the prince's brother, who was at the conference, immediately raised the country, and overtaking Patrick on his return, slew both him and the greater part of his attendants."

below the horizon with a splendour that belongs to the monarch of day. His career through the blue vault had been like that of "a bridegroom coming out of his chamber," and the retinue of clouds, "in thousand liveries dight," that had attended him to his setting, clustered in masses of all forms, at the parting line, bathed in the gorgeous hues of his farewell greeting. Softly they seemed to dissolve into rivers of light, studded with amber islands, or parted by bright headlands of amethyst and jasper. As the hour advanced, the blue of the sky became changed to deepening grey, and fleecy fragments rolled off from the shifting clouds, and were wafted gently and silently, like phantom vessels, to the extreme verge of those molten streams. Creeks, and bays, and shining sands were painted there; rocks appeared pile upon pile, fantastic crags, golden fields and valleys, with rainbow-coloured boundaries, as though the fading pictures of earth had become transferred to the glowing heavens, till the robe of night almost imperceptibly descended over all things once so fair and full of delight. I love the dim twilight of an autumn day; it is the calm season of the tranquil spirit. The lingering landscape fades gradually from the sight, and as day's last vestige silently departs, the mind, withdrawn from the attraction of external objects, intuitively looks inward, and takes up the thread of thought and reflection, or exercises the memory, or draws upon the powers of the imagination.

"Oh! Twilight! Spirit that dost render birth
To dim enchantments; melting heaven with earth;—
Leaving on craggy hills and running streams
A softness like the atmosphere of dreams;
Thy hour to all is welcome!"

With the early dawn I surveyed the ruined fortress, of which but few, and those the most picturesque fragments, now remain, standing upon an eminence just at the point to which the Teivy advances its broad stream, and then gracefully curving in one of the most remarkable horseshoe bends ever seen, sends forward its reflux waters to wander through the green meadows, on its way to the sea at Cardigan Bay.

Leaving the castle and the playful Teivy, I bent my steps across the country, over a wild and mountainous district, through Cynwyl Elfed, pausing only to visit a remarkable cromlech in its neighbourhood. This tract presents but little that can claim attention, or interest the feeling of the traveller, until within a few miles of Carmarthen; when a scene of remarkable splendour bursts unexpectedly upon the delighted sight, comprehending a portion of the vale of the Towy, the Glamorganshire hills, part of the eastern arm of Milford Haven, the town and castle of Kidwelly, and a distant expanse bounded only by the far horizon.

Does the traveller desire to see the characteristic beauties of this pleasant land combined together, or scattered over comparatively but a small space, and thus presented almost at once within his reach? Let him take up his pilgrim's staff, and bend his steps, like the Wanderer, towards this picturesque county, where every diversity of mountain, river, coast, and valley scenery awaits him. Although the height of the mountains is not so great as in North Wales, yet in the district round Llyn y Van, Carreg-llwyd Carnyd, and Trichrug, are found scenes which cannot be exceeded for romantic grandeur and sublimity. The county is





THE HARBOR OF SAN FRANCISCO

watered by many interesting rivers, the chief of which is the Towey. It rises in Cardiganshire, and derives its first waters from an extensive morass on the hills near Tregaron, entering Carmarthenshire at the north-eastern extremity. It continues its course southerly to Llandovery, where it receives the united current of the rivers Bran and Gwdderig. It then runs past Langadoc and Llandilo Vawr, receiving many small tributary streams from the numerous mountains in this district. From Llandilo the Towey pursues its way westerly to Carmarthen, passing by and adding to the beauty of the scenery around Dynevor, Grongar Hill, Golden Grove, Middleton Hall, and other places celebrated for their sylvan beauties and historic interest. Besides the Towey there are other interesting rivers—the Tave, rising near the Percelly range; the Gwendraeth Vawr; the Lloughor, having its source in the Black Mountains. with many others of smaller size—"rivers unknown to song."

Carmarthen is pleasantly situated at the western extremity of the vale of the Towey, and is in some parts of considerable elevation, giving it a commanding prospect of that river, with the fine stone bridge of many arches, that spans it, and the delightful valley stretching beyond. If there be a charm which makes one spot of earth more than another dear to the eye of the traveller, that charm is to be found in the power it possesses to call up the recollections of his personal history, or to associate his imagination and feelings with the events connected with it, in the passages of ages long since gone by. In these events are made audible the otherwise silent footfalls of Time. The

chronicler hears the sound, and detects the Ancient in his stealthy flight, and before his scythe can perform its destructive office, he notes them on his scroll, and this becomes history to following generations. And so it has been with this interesting place. The Egyptian geographer Ptolemy has recorded it as the *Maridunum* of its Roman conquerors; and Carmarthen was once the capital of a district, towards which were converged the two great sections of that famous road, which traversed coast and mountain, called the *Strata Julia*. The pleasant sights and peaceful tracts that now detain the traveller's lingering steps, beheld the march of those mingled legions of haughty Rome, as they traversed, in warlike array, this region to camp or city, and from one line of conquest to another. But the period of Roman domination passed away, and Giraldus relates, that it was a place of great strength in the times of its native rulers, and fortified with towers and high brick walls, the remains of which are now very inconsiderable, though there are still many traces of the ruins near the river. The county gaol is built on the foundation of the old castle, of which tradition has handed to posterity but a scanty account. It is known, however, to have been the seat of the princes of the country, before the royal residence was transferred to Dinevaur; and in this place the ancient Britons held their parliament. Both the castle and the town have undergone the usual changes that belong to ages of violence and disputed possession, and in their vicissitudes have been besieged, destroyed, and again rebuilt. Lambarde tells a story, in connection with this neighbourhood, which strongly exhibits the attachment of

the natives to their country, and the difficulty their invaders found in obtaining possession of it. "Henry II.," he says, "having taken Rese Griffin Prisonner, a litle from Carmardin, sent a Knighte of Normanny, accompanied with the Deane of Cantermaur, to view the Castle of Dinevor and the country about it, meaninge, upon understandinge of the same, to have invaded that hole quarter. The Deane (beinge a Welcheman, called Guaidhamus) more lovingely to his Countrymen, then loyally to his Prince, conducted the Gentlemen throughe the most roughe, hyllye, and inaccessible places that he knewe, and when they wanted whereof to eate, he would lye downe, and fede on the Grass hungerley, sayinge, that 'his Countrymen had, for the most part, none other Foode;' and thus, by Penurye and Travaile so wearyed the Knighte, that at his Retorne he told the Kinge that 'the Countrye was more fitt for Beastes than Men, and not worthie the Charge of a Conquest.' The Kinge belevinge him, toke Rese Griffin's Homage, and sent him home without further Attempt against his Countrye."

The church of St. Peter contains some singular and interesting monuments. The grotesque female figure kneeling on the south side of the chancel, by the aid of its quaint inscription, tells the beholder the story of extensive benevolence, and satisfies at the same time his curiosity, by describing the subject as

"A choise Elixar of Mortalitie,

Who by her loanes in spit of Aduerse fates,
 She did preserue Mens persons and Estates;
 Would you then know who wen this good Woman,
 'Twas virtuous ANNE the Lady VAUGHAN."

Opposite to this excellent woman lie the recumbent figures of Sir Rhys ap Thomas and his lady. The gallant knight, clothed in a suit of plate armour, with the insignia of his order, and the emblazonry of family honours; and his lady in the modest costume of the age in which she lived, with an emblematic dove at her feet.

The traveller who looks upon these effigies in crumbling stone, now mutilated almost to obliteration, and calls to mind the stormy period in which the beings they are intended to represent once flourished, will not fail to rest his eye, with some interest, upon the subsequent pages, in which the Wanderer proposes to lay before him the curious and surprising incidents of the personal history of this warrior and his family, and their connection with the important events at that time occurring in South Wales.

At the western suburb of the town is a monument commemorating the gallant deeds of Sir Thomas Picton,*

* "Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Picton, G.C.B., memorable in the Peninsular campaign as the leader of what was pre-eminently called *the fighting division*, was known by the appellation of the *right hand* of Wellington. He received his death-wound in the daring enterprise of leading a charge of infantry against a solid square of French cavalry; an enterprise scarcely before attempted, except by Picton himself, who had more than once successfully executed it in the Peninsula. The duke of Wellington, in his despatch, passes a just eulogium on his worth. As soon as our army was sent to Flanders, government, it is stated, offered him the command of a division, but apprehending the duke of Wellington, as commander-in-chief, would leave the British force to some officer in whom he could not repose the same confidence, he declined the offer, adding, however, if the duke should personally require his services, he would instantly repair to the army. This requisition was made, and the general left the town on June the 11th, and on the 18th, terminated his honourable career in

who was killed at the battle of Waterloo. It was erected from a meagre and unsatisfactory design presented by Mr. Nash. On a square pedestal rises a Doric column, at the top of which is a statue of the general. On two sides of the pedestal *were* inscriptions, and on the others basso-relievos of the engagements at Waterloo and Badajoz, but so carelessly were they executed, that the weather has already almost defaced them. In 1829, the Rev. Edward Picton presented to the county a portrait of his brother, painted by the president of the Royal Academy, which is now suspended in the Grand Jury Room of the County Hall.

From Carmarthen to Llandilo (a distance of about fifteen miles) there are two roads, which run nearly parallel with the Towy, and on either side that river, along each of which are many objects of great attraction and interest for the antiquary and lover of nature. I determined first to examine the north or upper road, and see the hoary ruins of Dryslyn Castle—Grongar Hill, over which the poet Dyer has thrown such a halo of pleasant and quiet feeling,—the ancient royal fortress and park of Dynevor, making Llandilo my resting-place for a few days, and returning by the lower road through Golden Grove to Carmarthen.

the field of glory! He had made his will before his departure—he did not expect to return; but observed to a friend, that when he heard of his death, he would hear of a bloody day. The following pleasing trait in his character may be relied on:—Some time after relinquishing the government of Trinidad, the inhabitants voted him £5,000 as a testimony of their esteem. When a dreadful fire laid the capital in ashes at a subsequent period, a subscription was opened for the relief of the sufferers, and the general eagerly seized the opportunity of appropriating the £5,000 to that object.”

On leaving Carmarthen, on the opposite side of the Towey, stands Llangunnor Hill, below which is seen a farm-house, called Ty Gwyn (the white house), and is that in which Sir Richard Steele* lived for many years, and wrote several essays and dramatic pieces. It is situated in the centre of the small estate he inherited from the Sherlock family. After his profusion and improvidence in the metropolis, and the consequent embarrassments he experienced, he lived here in comparative seclusion, intending, by economy and the exertion of his literary powers, to acquire a sufficient income to liquidate the debts contracted by his former extravagance, and maintain with credit his rank in society. This amiable and eminent man, towards the

* Many humorous anecdotes are related of Sir Richard, which throw some light upon his habits and character. Sending one morning for Savage, the poet, without any previous conversation, he requested him to step into his carriage, and was followed by Sir Richard, when the coachman drove to a small tavern near Hyde Park Corner. Sir Richard then informed him that he intended to publish a pamphlet, and wished him to write while he dictated. After dining they again proceeded with the pamphlet, which was finished in the evening, when Savage expected Sir Richard would call for the reckoning, and return home. How was he surprised, when informed that the pamphlet must be sold before the dinner could be paid for! and Savage was, therefore, obliged to go and offer the production for sale, and procured two guineas for it. Sir Richard then returned home, having retired for the day to avoid his creditors. On another occasion, Sir Richard having invited a party to dinner, his visitors were surprised at the number of liveries which surrounded the table; after dinner, one of them inquiring how such an extensive train of domestics could be consistent with his fortune, Sir Richard frankly confessed they were fellows of whom he would very willingly be rid—that they were bailiffs; and since he could not send them away, he had thought it convenient to embellish them with liveries.

end of his life, was carried by two servants, in an open chair, about the neighbourhood.

Two miles on the road is the village of Abergwilli. It was at this place that the good Prince Llewelyn fought an obstinate battle with Rhun, an adventurer from Scotland, calling himself the son of Prince Meredith. The adventurer ranged his troops in order of battle, and exhorted them to courage and constancy, but withdrew privately during the contest to a place of safety where he might watch the event. The brave prince, on the contrary, was seen wherever the battle raged the most fiercely, and by his valour achieved a victory, in which his enemy was slain, notwithstanding his efforts to escape.

Near to the village, and just at that point where a most romantic bend of the Towey washes the margin of the lawn, stands the episcopal palace belonging to the Bishop of Saint David's, commanding a view of this majestic river in its reflux meanderings up the vale, before it resumes its onward course towards the sea. The Towey, when it leaves its early mountain-track, and receives the united streams of the Bran and Gwdderig, seems to revel with its accumulated waters through the rich valley that bears its name; at one time rolling in an impetuous headlong torrent, and then circling with a gentle current almost from side to side, as if to lave some favoured spot, or to expend its joy in sportive gambols, separating as it flows the whole extent into distinct portions of great beauty. About a mile beyond Abergwilli is one of these little dells, through which a clear and nameless stream pursues its

way from the hills to bury itself in the channel of the river. On the western side of this little dell an eminence rises, called Merlin's Hill, which tradition has assigned as the birthplace of this extraordinary man; near the brow is an opening in the rocks, which the country people still credulously show as the place in which the seer practised his incantations.

"For he by wordes could call out of the sky
Both suune and moone, and make them him obey;
The land to sea, and sea to mainland dry,
And darksom night he eke could turn to day;
Huge hostes of men he could alone dismay,
And hostes of men of meanest things could frame,
Whenso him list his enemies to pay:
That to this day, for terror of his fame,
The feendes do quake when any him to them does name."

Ascending the hill yet higher, an extensive view presents itself of the vale as far as the hill above Llanarthney.

The birth and life of Merlin, "surnamed Ambrosius," as may be supposed, is full of mystery. His mother was a royal virgin, the daughter of King Demetius, and, according to her confession, the prophet was "conceived by the compression of some fantastical spiritual creature." This, however, is considered only a fiction raised by her woman's wit, "to conceal the person of her sweetheart," whose life would have been endangered by a revelation of the truth. He was brought forth from his obscurity by the profligate King Vortigern, when he was purposing to build a castle to protect him from his enraged subjects; but in which design he had been continually thwarted by prodigies of various kinds. The king, by the aid of his seer, at last accomplished his purpose. The castle was built,

and here the monarch is said to have dwelt in seclusion, "diverted by the many pleasant fancies" which Merlin devised to drive away his melancholy. But when the king's fate drew nigh, Merlin found means to escape from the devoted fortress, became a good Christian, and foreshowed truly many things to come. Among other events in which the ancient seer is concerned, he is said to have brought "the great stones which stand till this day on the plain of Salisbury, during one stormy night from Ireland, and caused them to be placed there in remembrance of the British lords who were slain on that spot." Merlin was destined, notwithstanding his supernatural powers, to be the subject of human sympathies, and to endure some of the disappointments that arise out of them. He fell in love with the "Lady of the Lake;" but "she was ever passing weary of him, and fain would have been delivered of him." The prophet followed his mistress into Brittany, where, as the tradition goes, he was enchanted into a white-thorn bush, in the forest of Breceliande, by the arts which, in a moment of weakness, he had disclosed to her. His grave is said to be close by the fairy fountain of Baranton. In the words of the Gaulish chronicle, "*Là dort le vieux Druide, au murmure des eaux et du vent qui gémit dans les bruyères d'alentour.*"

Passing on two miles further I reached Pont ar Cothy, which extensive stream, rising in the north-eastern limits of the county, forms a junction with the Towey about a mile below the bridge. The antiquarian will find subjects for his research in this neighbourhood, amongst the remains of an old castle, on an elevated

part of the western bank of the Cothy, within two miles of the road to Llandilo, and of another fortress, three miles beyond this, on the eastern side of the stream.

It was early morning, and the sun had just emerged from his cloudy pavilion, when I started from Carmarthen to explore the abundant beauties of the district of the Towey. It was now noon, and that great luminary was on his southern track, but attended by such a retinue of turbid and ever-shifting clouds, as made me apprehend a fearful thunderstorm. I therefore hastened onwards by Llanegwad, passing close to the river where it bends in serpentine evolutions amidst the luxuriant pasture-land at Wern-ddu. Opposite to this place, looking over the Towey, rises Nelson's Tower, erected by Sir William Paxton, to commemorate the victory and death of that hero, and which forms one of the most conspicuous points in the vale. I now struck off from the main road, and turning to the right reached Felindre, and crossing the Dulas, a little tributary stream, came to Drysllyn Castle. The ruins of this ancient stronghold are situated on a bold green eminence, which rises like an island in the midst of a wide opening in the valley, and overhangs the western shore of the Towey. From the summit of these ruins is one of the finest prospects in the vale, extending to the eastward eight or ten miles, and they themselves form an interesting object when viewed from the surrounding scenery.

Drysllyn Castle once occupied a large space of ground, but its remains are now very inconsiderable, comprising only some fragments of the walls, and a part of one of



W. Harvey

1868

The Old Mill at the Foot of the Mountains
A. Harvey, 1868. Oil on canvas. 18 x 24 in.



the towers. It was erected by a prince of the house of Dynevor, and was amongst the last of the possessions which that family was permitted to retain. In former times it must have been surrounded by a wild and savage tract of country; for Leland, in speculating upon its etymology, writes, "Dryslan, as I learned, is as much as to say, a place full of difficulty and encumbrance to pass through." This hoary castle has heard in the "olden times" the song of minstrelsy within its ancient halls, and beleaguering hosts have set themselves down before its gates in deadly array. Near the spot where I stood, during the rebellion of Rhys ap Meredith, in the time of Edward I., its massy wall had given way from the operations of a secret mine, and buried in its fall the besieging generals, Stafford and Monchency, with many of their officers. The storm that I had feared, or anticipated, had now passed unbroken away. The clouds which had dogged the sun in its course had been dissipated, or drawn off like a retiring host to a distant part of the heavens, and, as I left the ruined castle, the sun again shone forth with increased splendour.

The foot-track to the eastward led me over the rising ground by Pentre Bach, a few hundred yards beyond which rises the side of Grongar Hill. This celebrated place is much indebted both to history and poetry for the fame which it has so long enjoyed, and for the charm that still rests upon it. On its summit there have been traced, in later years, vestiges of a Roman encampment, with the usual rectangular intrenched area, which old Leland saw in his time, and which he describes with his usual minuteness and simplicity.

"Ther is," he says, "within halfe a myle of Drislan Castel on Tewe, a mightye campe of men of Warre, with 4 or 5 diches, and an area in the middle." But Grongar Hill, like the Man of Ross, is indebted principally to the force of friendship and the fervour of poetry for the interest it has so long enjoyed. Who has not connected with the earliest associations of his mind the beauties with which the pen of Dyer* has invested it, and cherished amongst his most ardent anticipations, the impassioned desire to make a pilgrimage to this delightful spot?

"Grongar Hill invites my song,
 Draw the landscape bright and strong:
 Grongar, in whose mossy cells,
 Sweetly musing, Quiet dwells;
 Grongar, in whose silent shade,
 For the modest Muses made,
 So oft I have, the evening still,
 At the fountain of a rill,
 Sat upon a flow'ry bed,
 With my hand beneath my head,
 While strayed my eyes o'er Towey's flood,
 Over mead and over wood."

I descended the hill, and bade adieu both to the historian and the poet, as the sun's last rays were resting on the opposite eminence above Golden Grove. For awhile he seemed to hang his shining orb on its highest pinnacles, as if to bid a glorious farewell to the

* Dyer was born at the mansion called Aberglasney, on the estate, in 1700, and was educated for the profession of the law: but after the death of his father he became a pupil of Richardson, an eminent artist of that day, and went to Rome for improvement in his art. Afterwards he relinquished painting, studied for the Church, and procured the livings of Coningsley and Kirkby, in Leicestershire.

hemisphere he was about to leave, and then withdrew, leaving the refractions of his brightness to fringe the mountain-peaks of Llangathan, and to spread a line of light along the surrounding ridge. The misty shades of evening were gathering around me when I gained the high road about three miles from Llandilo Vawr. It was not long ere I reached this little town, and took up my quarters at the Cawdor Arms. In its excellent accommodations, and at its bountiful table, I refreshed myself, after a day of more than usual fatigue and pleasure, intending to make my visit to the grounds of Dynevor on the following morning, and to spend another day in exploring those dreary mountains, among which Carreg Cennen Castle rears its towering head; afterwards to return to Carmarthen along the vale, by the southern road, taking Golden Grove, and other objects of interest, in my way.

Llandilo Vawr is a picturesque little place, occupying the sloping sides of a hill, the ridge of which is the centre of the town, and the main road through it. It is built close to the edge of Dynevor Park, and just above the Towey, which here makes one of its capricious evolutions amongst the luxuriant meadows around. The river is crossed on the southern road by a substantial bridge, erected by the well-known Welsh architect David Edwards. The country round Llandilo abounds with so many objects to interest the tourist, that it ought to be made his rendezvous for a few days:* and

* To those who can spare only one day, I would recommend the following excursion from Llandilo:—through Dynevor Park to the old castle; Llangathan Mountain, above Grongar Hill; Drysllyn Castle; then cross the river at the ferry to Nelson's Tower, and return through Golden Grove.

since the Cawdor Arms has been established, there is no lack of excellent accommodation, even for the most fastidious. To the angler this place affords abundant sport, from the salmon and trout fishing to be found in the Towey, and in several small streams around. It is the best point, also, from which to make excursions to the romantic scenery in the mountainous districts about Carreg Cennen, and along the rich and quiet retreats that form the most attractive beauties of the vale.

Llandilo Vawr is not without its historical interest, for Caradoc mentions that the decisive battle between the armies of Edward I. and Prince Llewelyn, which subjected Wales to the sovereignty of England, was fought near this town, in 1282. On this occasion the king's forces were commanded by the earl of Gloucester and Sir Edmund Mortimer, who achieved the victory at a great sacrifice of life.

The following morning was unusually fine, and the air delightfully fresh and invigorating. The overhanging mist lay stretched like a sleepy covering on the valley, while the distant hills were already lighted up with the bright rays of the god of day. Nature seemed astir in those elevated regions; in the valley she seemed to slumber with the sluggard's wish. Who would not choose to have his foot on those mountains, "to be," as Jeremy Taylor says, "a courtier of the sun, to dwell in his eye, and look in his face, and wait upon him in his chambers of the east?" I entered Dynevor Park by the little gate beside the main entrance, accompanied by an intelligent guide acquainted with the neighbouring localities. On proceeding only a few yards to an elevated part of the

grounds, a scene of surprising beauty seemed to burst upon the sight. The green and sloping lawns, studded with stately trees, dressed in coloured foliage, appeared to swell and extend before the eye. Afar the tower of the castle reared its hoary head above the dark mass of tall oaks by which it was surrounded, and with which it beautifully harmonized. Just opposite, glowing in light, stood Golden Grove. As the morning advanced, the fertile valley, radiant with sunshine, revealing the clear, playful waters of the silver Towey, stretched right onward, while the mountain-ridges, far, far away, closed the wonderful scene. Directed by the guide, I bent my steps a few hundred yards to the left, towards an eminence called Venland Vawr, on which two groups of tall firs stand conspicuous, protecting the visitor from the heat of the sun, and affording by their shade the opportunity of quietly surveying the surrounding landscape. With the exception of the view from the Deer Park, the prospects from this place are amongst the finest which the valley affords.

Standing on this spot, which nearly bisects the vale, the view to the north-east, looking up the stream, extends over the district of Llangadock almost to Llandoverly, comprehending in its more easterly range the high black mountain of Trichrug. Towards the south rise the hills around Carreg Cennen Castle, and the towering summits of Mynydd Du. Below is the ever-fresh and rolling river, from the banks of which spreads the domain of Golden Grove, stretched as in a map before the sight.

Pursuing my way towards the castle, I passed a deep dingle covered with immense trees and underwood, ren-

dered almost transparent by the powerful rays of the sun which played upon it. A little beyond, near the junction of two winding roads, from almost opposite directions, an interesting and delightful landscape presents itself; and, again and again, as I followed out the path, new and fresh combinations of natural beauty became evolved from the rich and varied elements so prodigally flung around this favoured place. Diverging to the left, I passed through a kind of avenue of full-grown ash, which leads to the mouldering ruins of this once-splendid residence, now embosomed in aged trees, that seem to claim an ancestry coeval with the fortress itself.

The remains of the royal Castle of Dynevor are considerable; one large tower, and some of the walls, continue almost entire. From the most authentic accounts, the castle was circular in its form, and fortified with a double moat and rampart, and appears to have been erected in 877, by Roderique the Great, and was in the possession of Rhys ap Theodore, who probably extended its site in the reign of William the Conqueror. Giraldus mentions this fortress in his Itinerary, as "the principal palace of South Wales, standing on the toppe of a hyll in Cantermawr." Soon after his time it was greatly damaged; but, being rebuilt and fortified, it became the seat of the princes of the country. It was besieged by the forces of Henry I., in 1226; a sanguinary contest took place, and he was repulsed, with the loss of two thousand men, by Prince Llewelyn. It was alternately held by opposing belligerent parties, but was finally demolished in the civil wars, and its ruins granted by Henry VII. to Sir Rhys ap Thomas,

a descendant of the Welsh princes, and ancestor of the present possessor of the estate, to whom he was so much indebted for his recovery of the crown of England. Here, in the reign of its ancient princes, the bards used to assemble to keep their triennial festival of the Eisteddfod.

I ascended what was once the round tower, built over a tremendous precipice on the south-east, and which formed one of the angles of the castle wall. From its topmost height I beheld a prospect the most varied, luxuriant, and enchanting, that the eye ever ranged over. The rich woods of oak and chestnut, clothing the precipitous descent of the castellated hill, down to the water's edge, and the valley stretching off from its base, arrayed in green and gold of the loveliest hues, intersected and enlivened by the sportive meanderings of the river. Within reach of the vision were comprehended all of hill or valley scenery; the bleak mountain-summits, rarely trodden except by the solitary foot of the curious traveller; and the verdant tranquil pastures, teeming with life and plenty; with here and there those distinguished spots which history and poetry have combined to invest with an earthly immortality. Dynevor will afford a day's enjoyment—"a summer's day,"—as Yorick says,

"From morn to dewy eve."

And so it did to the Wanderer, who lingered amongst its beauties, till the young moon lighted his steps homewards to mine host's of the Cawdor Arms.

To the south-east of Llandilo Vawr, in the most bleak and inhospitable district of South Wales, sur-

rounded by a chain of almost inaccessible mountains, stands Carreg Cennen Castle. Behind this barrier of everlasting hills, are deep wide valleys, in the lowest channel of which the Cennen rolls its stream, after rain, with the headlong fury of a mountain torrent. From the edge of this stream rises an insulated and almost perpendicular peak, on the summit of which, covering the whole extent, frown the black ruins of this stronghold of feudal power, accessible only on one side. The castle is said to owe its erection to one of the lords of Is Cennen, a knight of King Arthur's Round Table. Its strong and simple masonry assigns it to an earlier origin, and its present remains exhibit its ample arrangements and impregnable strength. Caradoc, the Welsh chronicler, relates that it was once delivered up to the English, by the mother of Rhys Vechan, out of dislike to her son, but was afterwards retaken by him. There is a winding cave bored through the solid rock, which descends by the northern edge to the depth of one hundred and fifty feet, at the bottom of which was a well, intended formerly to furnish water to the garrison. From this elevated precipice the eye commands a prospect of prodigious extent, comprehending a large reach of the finest part of the vale of the Towey, the vale of Llangyndeirn, with the ocean in the distance, and the vale of Llandybie, with a considerable portion of the vale of Llaughor beyond it.

It was with the first rays of the morning sun that I commenced my walk to Carreg Cennen Castle; and before the inhabitants of the little town I had left, had resumed the busy occupations of the day, I had plunged deep into the wild cwms that separate the mountain-

range connected with the Trichrug from the remarkable fortress to which I was pursuing my way. After surveying all the wonders which I have already described to the reader, I set my face again towards that "river of romance," whose picturesque shores had so long attracted my vagrant steps. My next resting-place was in the refreshing shades of Golden Grove, one of the seats of Lord Cawdor. In the time of the Civil Wars between Charles I. and his Parliament, Cromwell, in his way to besiege Pembroke Castle, came suddenly across the country with a troop of horse, to seize the person of the royalist earl, who fortunately had received notice of his approach, and escaped in time to a sequestered farm-house amongst the hills, and thus avoided being taken. The Protector, disappointed in his purpose, dined with the countess, and afterwards pursued his march to Pembroke.

The former house, belonging to the family of the Vaughans, was seated near the banks of the Towey; but the new one, built by the present proprietor, is erected in the centre of the estate, commanding the sweep of the green lawn in front, the meadows which fringe it on the north to the river's brink, and the grey tower of old Dynevor,—on the west, the graceful line of Grongar Hill. This place will ever be associated in the mind of the English reader with the remembrance of that excellent man, Jeremy Taylor. Here he sought shelter during the period of Cromwell's ascendancy,*

* At the commencement of this struggle, Taylor joined the king at Oxford, and dedicated his time and pen to his service. Previously to the termination of Charles's misfortunes, Taylor received from him, in token of his regard, his watch, and a few pearls and rubies, which

and in this place he composed many of his valuable works of practical devotion, one of which bears the title of *Golden Grove*. This book has some poetical pieces which strikingly illustrate the sparkling richness of the author's mind. His "*Meditation on Heaven*" contains this luxuriant passage :—

"That bright eternity,
Where the great King's transparent throne
Is of an entire jasper stone ;
There the eye
O' the chrysolite
And a sky
Of diamonds, rubies, and chrysoprase,
And above all, Thy holy face,
Make an eternal clarity.
When Thou Thy jewels dost bind up, that day
Remember us, we pray,
That where the beryl lies
And the crystal 'bove the skies,
There Thou mayst appoint us a place
Within the brightness of Thy face ;
And our soul
In the scroll
Of life and blissfulness enrol,
That we may praise Thee to eternity."

Dr. Rust, his biographer, thus describes him, when he was called upon to supply, for a time, the place of lecturer at St. Paul's Cathedral. "Here he preached," says Rust, "to the admiration and astonishment of his auditory, and by his florid and youthful beauty, and had ornamented the ebony case in which he kept his bible. He suffered much, and was several times imprisoned during the Protectorate of Cromwell ; but at the Restoration, the smile of royal favour played upon him, and he became successively bishop of Down and Connor, chancellor of the University of Dublin, and member of the Irish privy council.



THE GREAT BRIDGE AT THE FALLS OF THE GREAT FALLS



W. P. Anderson

1904

sweet and pleasant air, and sublime and raised discourses, he made his hearers take him for some young angel newly descended from the visions of glory."

In the following eulogium, the same biographer sums up his character, after the close of his career in death:—"Nature," says he, "had befriended him much in his constitution; for he was a person of a most sweet and obliging humour, of great candour and ingenuity; and there was so much of salt and fineness of wit, and prettiness of address in his familiar discourses, as made his conversation have all the pleasantness of a comedy, and all the usefulness of a sermon; his soul was made up of harmony, and he never spake but he charmed his hearers, not only with the clearness of his reason, but all his words, and his very tones and cadences, were strangely musical."

It was drawing towards the close of the day when I reached Kidwelly, a little town once rivalling the port of Carmarthen, but now much lessened and reduced, standing on both sides of the lesser Gwendraeth, which is here crossed by a handsome stone bridge. The castle, which occupies a bold rocky eminence on the western side of the Gwendraeth Fach, forms the object of greatest interest to the traveller. There is an air of solemn magnificence in the appearance of this edifice, and its remains are, perhaps, in a more perfect state than those of any similar structure in the Principality. The strength of this fortress corresponded with the important part it sustained in the perpetual conflicts which marked the early history of the country. The massy walls which inclosed its square area were not only fortified by strong angular

towers, but also at measured intervals by lesser ones, by means of which its defenders could readily communicate assistance to each other, or interrupt any temporary success on the part of its besiegers. Its magnificent gateway to the west was protected and ornamented by two lofty round towers, which are still in tolerable preservation. This castle was built by King John, but was repaired and strengthened by the Norman adventurer William de Londres. It afterwards changed possessors with the various dominant masters of this unhappy country, during its state of feudal government and civil warfare. It fell into the possession of the famous Sir Rhys ap Thomas, in the time of Henry VII., and was finally devised to Lord Cawdor by one of the family of the Vaughans, of Golden Grove.

CHAPTER XIV.

Sir Rhys ap Thomas.

Plantag.—Since you are tongue-tied, and so loth to speak,
In dumb significants proclaim your thoughts;
Let him that is a true-born gentleman,
And stands upon the honour of his birth,
If he suppose that I have pleaded truth,
From off this briar pluck a white rose with me.

Som.—Let him that is no coward, nor no flatterer,
But dare maintain the party of the truth,
Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me.

War.—I love no colours, and, without all colour
Of base insinuating flattery,
I pluck this white rose with Plantagenet.

Suff.—I pluck this red rose with young Somerset,
And say, withal I think, he held the right.—SHAKESPEARE.

HENRY V. of England, or, as he was called in his youth, Harry of Monmouth, had finished a brilliant career of military achievements at the Castle of Vincennes, in France, and the sceptre of Britain passed from the hands of one of its bravest and most vigorous princes into those of his baby successor. The imbecility of the child was followed by the incapacity of the man; and the reign of Henry VI. gave rise to that ferocious civil contest, known best by the name of the War of the White and Red Roses. It was in

the wild mountains of Wales that the White Rose, the emblem of the House of York, first budded, and afterwards became the signal of victory in the sanguinary and well-fought fields of St. Albans, Northampton, Mortimer's Cross, and on the plains of Towton.

At this time, Gruffydd ap Nicholas (whose descendants became at a subsequent period the lords of Abermarlais, in Carmarthenshire) exercised great power and influence in the southern division of the Principality. Ambitious, turbulent, and crafty, he was well fitted to play a conspicuous part in the stirring times in which he lived. Too choleric to be long at peace with his powerful neighbours, he was alternately engaged in deadly feuds with the leaders and adherents of both the contending parties that disturbed the empire. Consistent and unremitting only in his hatred to the English, he permitted his retainers to commit continual depredations upon the possessions of the Lords Marchers, and to pillage their lands. The injury thus inflicted upon the English borders was too great and frequent to pass unnoticed, and in one of those occasional pauses in this age of civil strife,—the quietness of exhaustion rather than the repose of peace,—Gruffydd was cited before the king's court, to answer for his violence and contumacy, and Lord Whitney and other commissioners were sent into Wales to investigate his conduct. Gruffydd, who had heard of the commission, but was not fully informed of its objects, laid his plans with the craftiness, and executed them with the boldness, peculiar to his character. He contrived to dissipate any fears which the commissioners might have entertained from his

formidable power, by meeting them on their entry into Carmarthenshire, himself meanly dressed, and accompanied only by four or five attendants "raggedlie attired," and as miserably mounted. Right glad was Lord Whitney to find the truculent Welshman, as he thought, then in his power, and not a little astonished was he also to hear him, with apparent affability and confidence, offer his services to conduct the commissioners to Carmarthen, the place of their destination. The party moved forward in high glee, each speculating with secret satisfaction upon his success, and conversing with that ease and volubility which belongs naturally to persons so well content with themselves.

Their road followed the windings of the Bran as far as the little town of Llandovery, near which that river unites with the Gwydderig in its confluence with the Towey. On the western bank, situate on a rocky eminence, the castle looked over the whole extent of the romantic vale of the Bran. The united waters of these celebrated streams formed then, as now, that majestic river which is the glory of this part of the Principality. The English lord, and the commissioners in their official array, followed by the humble Welshman, with his tattered attendants, crossed the river by the fine stone bridge a little below the town, and pushed forward in a brisk trot towards the princely mansion of Abermarlais.

The thick woods that lined the shores of the Towey completely hid the towers of the castle from the view of the approaching party. A graceful curving of the road, however, brought them unexpectedly to the foot of the gentle eminence on which it stood. Gruffydd,

as it was into a formidable company by the two sons of Gruffydd with their mountain retainers. The road hitherto had run along the base of that mountainous ridge which lines the northern side of the Towy, almost from Llandovery to Carmarthen, until it reaches that bright open plain, where the Gwilli forms its junction with that river, giving its significant title to the little village of Abergwilli. The party had scarcely debouched into the plain, before it was met by a splendid body-guard of five hundred "tall men" on foot, handsomely dressed, and well armed and accounted, under the command of the elder son of Gruffydd.

Thus magnificently attended, the commissioners entered Carmarthen, then the capital of South Wales, and were conducted with the greatest ceremony to the sumptuous lodgings that had been prepared for them. Gruffydd now excused his further presence upon the commissioners, and committed to his sons the care of seeing to their accommodation, and of attending upon them to the banquet that was prepared in the Guild Hall of the town.

Lord Whitney was not displeased to escape the keen observation of his companion, and finding himself now more at ease, privately sent for the mayor and sheriffs, and, opening to them the commission with which he was charged by the king, demanded their assistance to arrest Gruffydd, which it was agreed should be done on the following morning. The banquet was now prepared, and the commissioners were escorted with much pomp by the sons of Gruffydd, attended by their men-at-arms, to the hall. The tables had been arranged along the centre of the floor, and according to the archi-

ture of these times, a row of pillars, with grotesque, fanciful carvings separated the upper end of the room, which was slightly elevated, and which was usually set apart for the most distinguished guests. To a seat purposely placed here, and splendidly hung with cloth of gold, Owen conducted Lord Whitney, and took his station immediately on his right. On each side of this elevated part of the spacious hall, galleries had been raised, in which were placed the ancient bards of that land of minstrelsy. The guests betook themselves with right good will to dispense the cheer which had been sumptuously provided, according to the profuse hospitality which then prevailed. Owen plied his noble guest, during supper, with those sweet-spiced liquors which formed no inconsiderable part of the domestic expense of the nobles, the mixture of which was an art derived principally from the French, and was greatly esteemed by our ancestors in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

"There was eke waxing many a spice
As clove, gilofre, and licorice,
Gingibir, and grean de Paris,
Canell at setewale of pris,
And many a spice delitable
To eaten whan men rise fro table."

Ypocras and garhiofilac, as being the most prized at this period, with other "delicate and precious drinks," were lavishly distributed on this occasion, and served not a little to produce in the English commissioners a state of convivial carelessness and hilarity. Owen was prepared to take advantage of this, and observing that Lord Whitney had put the commission into the open

sleeve of his cloak, he contrived to abstract it from thence unnoticed, and to place it securely in his own pocket. Then turning to Lord Whitney, with great significance, "Methinks our noble guest," he said, "should *lose* for awhile the weighty matters of state, that have doubtless brought him to these rude parts, and do the honour to this festive greeting which our country's customs require. Hither, boy," beckoning to his attendant, "bring our family's hirlas, and see that it lack not of that precious liquor which thy art has taught thee so delicately to prepare."

In a few minutes the attendant returned, bearing the ample hirlas, or drinking-horn,—usually filled, and emptied at a draught, at great festive assemblies, which was at once the pledge of fidelity and the expression of personal hospitality. The hirlas which the Welshman presented to the English lord in this case, was of large dimensions and graceful contour, finely polished and richly inlaid with plates of solid silver, chased with the family names and device, and to which was pendent a massy chain of the same precious metal. Lord Whitney knew the custom to which his host alluded, and being too well satisfied with himself to oppose his humour, he drained the contents of the horn with evident satisfaction.

Owen now gave a sign to his favourite bard, Tudor Aled, whose fingers had for some time been gliding rapidly, though silently, over the strings of his harp, which was already placed to do honour to his own and his country's fame.

"Minstrel," said Owen, "thou art wont to enliven our festivals with thy instrument, which I know thou

boastest of; prepare now thy happiest strain, such as is suited to this high occasion, and let our noble guest hear what melody thy practised hand can call forth from that harp of thine."

The bard waited not for further parley. He comprehended his patron's meaning, and after sweeping with flying fingers across the diapason of his instrument, as if to instruct his ear in the echoes he meant to awaken, he dashed at once into that bold festive song of the princely poet of his country.

"Fill the HIRLAS HORN, my boy,
Nor let the tuneful lips be dry
That warble Owen's praise;
Whose walls with warlike spoils are hung,
And open wide his gates are flung
In Cambria's peaceful days.
By Owen's arm the valiant bled;
From Owen's arm the coward fled
Aghast with wild affright;
Let then those haughty lords beware
How Owen's just revenge they dare,
And tremble at his sight."

The guests were all hushed into breathless silence when the bard ceased; and as he gently put aside his harp, whose wild peculiar tones were still lingering in dying cadence within the spacious hall, he exhibited that striking and almost prophetic character which belonged to his order, in its best days, before the cruel massacre of Bangor, when the Welsh bards animated their country's warriors to the fight, or sung their victories. His rich mantle of blue cloth, thickly embroidered with small figures in gold of the raven, his patron's crest, and lined with the fur of the beaver,

an animal then not uncommon in the Principality, was fastened at the right shoulder by a massy clasp of polished gold; his vest or tunic was of azure silk, exposing the form of his ample chest as it expanded with the enthusiastic efforts of his minstrelsy; while encircling his neck, a broad gold chain of twisted links, the gift of his patron, had hung gracefully vibrating during the rapid motion of his fingers as they passed along the instrument. The venerable bard arose when his song was finished, and as he leaned upon "his harp so fair," he seemed in the majestic outline and rich illumination of his figure, to stand like the very type of his perished race, invested with the grey antiquity of ages.

"Tall was his form, and thin and spare,
And white as snow his beard and hair;
Back from his brow his white locks flow,
And the high open forehead show;
O'er his pale cheek rich roses fly,
And more than youth illumines his eye."

Lord Whitney was by this time in that enviable state of mental obscurity, from the strong potations that his wily neighbour had pressed upon him, that though he was sensible of a multitude of ideas floating like atoms through his brain, he was incapable of reducing them to any palpable shape or figure; or else, perhaps, he would not have failed to have noticed the singular coincidence of the minstrel's song, with the name and circumstances of his apparently friendly and hospitable host. A flowing wassail cup of rich piment concluded the entertainment of the evening, and the commissioners were conducted to their lodgings, in a state of happy forgetfulness of the object of

their journey, to sleep away the effects of their boisterous revelry.

Owen communicated to his father the success of his plan, but Gruffydd abated nothing of his formal courtesy and attention to the commissioners. He sent his sons in the morning with a numerous retinue to attend them to the Guild Hall, the scene of the night's festivity, where they met the mayor and sheriffs of the borough. Lord Whitney chuckled at the thought of having the redoubtable Welshman so completely in his power, and summoned Gruffydd to attend. He forthwith appeared splendidly dressed, and was immediately arrested by the officers of the court. He made no show of resistance, but with an assumed air of great respect, requested that the proceedings against him might be conducted according to the forms of law, and that the commission, under which he was attached, might be publicly read, alleging that he could not otherwise consider himself bound to submit to the authority of the commissioners.

Lord Whitney readily assented to his request; but upon putting his hand into the sleeve of his cloak, discovered, for the first time, the loss of his commission. Consternation was visible on his countenance, and an inquiry was immediately whispered round amongst the commissioners' attendants for the missing document.

Gruffydd surveyed the party for some time with secret satisfaction, but in complacent silence.

"Methinks, Lord Whitney," he said at last, casting a scrutinizing glance upon the commissioners, "if he comes here by the king's grace as he says, must have valued his commission too highly, lightly to have com-

mitted it to the safe keeping of that ruffie, or carelessly to have lost it. Look, my lord, to your piebald coat or your silk hood, you may have placed it there, perhaps, to be nearer to your memory." Then starting with fury, clapping his hat hastily upon his head, and turning to his friends and followers—"What!" he said, "have we cozeners and cheaters come hither to abuse the king's majesty's power, and to disquiet his true-hearted subjects, the good citizens of this our loyal town?" Looking at the commissioners, afterward, with a bitter frown—

"By the mass," said he, "before the next day come to an end, I will hang up all your bodies for traitors and impostors." And immediately ordered his men-at-arms to seize and carry them to prison.

The commissioners were panic struck, and entreated for their lives; which Gruffydd at last granted on condition that Lord Whitney should put on his livery coat of blue, and be bound by an oath to go up to the king, acknowledge his own offences, and justify the Welshman's proceedings. The terrified commissioner, to preserve his life, consented, and faithfully fulfilled his oath.

Gruffydd, continuing his depredations upon the Lords Marchers, was again cited before the king's court, and on failing to attend was convicted of felony. This determined him to break with the house of Lancaster, and to declare for the duke of York. He joined the earl of March, the duke's son, with eight hundred men, well armed and appointed, and was slain in the bloody field of Mortimer's Cross, after he had lived

long enough to know that victory had declared on the side of the White Rose.

Gruffydd was succeeded in his power and possessions by his eldest son Thomas, who inherited the courage of his father, but in connection with a mildness of disposition, and an elegance of manners, rarely united in those cruel times of civil warfare. To avoid intermixing in the contests of the rival houses, he withdrew to the accomplished court of the duke of Burgundy, in whose service he enrolled himself. Here he fell in love with the duke's niece, and to avoid the consequence of his indiscreet attachment, he returned to his native land.

Thomas ap Gruffydd was famous for his boldness and skill in the tilt and tourney, and in single combat. After his return from Burgundy he had several encounters of this latter kind, particularly with Henry ap Gwylim, of Court Henry, in the vale of the Towey, who repeatedly challenged him, and was as constantly vanquished. A quarrel with William, the proud earl of Pembroke, brought upon him another adversary, whose adventures are attended with some humorous circumstances, which, as they tend to illustrate the character of the times, are here related. The earl's quarrel was taken up by one Tuberville, a notable swash buckler of that day, "one that would fight on anie slight occasion, not much heeding the cause." Tuberville sent his defiance to Thomas ap Gruffydd by one of the earl's retainers.

"Go, tell the knave," said he, "that if he will not accept my challenge, I will ferret him out of his cunnie

berrie, the Castle of Abermarlais." Thomas received this message very jocosely. "By my faith," said he, "if thy master is in such haste to be killed, I would that he should choose some other person to undertake the office of executioner."

This reply very much provoked the challenger, and in a rage he set out for Abermarlais, and entering the gate, the first person whom he encountered was Thomas ap Gruffydd himself, sitting at his ease, dressed in a plain grey frock gown, whom he took for the porter.

"Tell me, fellow," said Tuberville, "is thy master Thomas ap Gruffydd, within?"—"Sir," answered Thomas, "he is at no great distance; if thou wouldst have aught with him, I will bear thy commands."

"Then tell him," said he, "that here is one Tuberville would fain speak with him." Thomas hearing his name, and observing the fury he was in, could scarcely refrain from laughing in his face. But restraining himself, he said he would acquaint his master; and on going into his room sent two or three of his servants to call him in. Tuberville no sooner saw Thomas ap Gruffydd than, without making any apology for the mistake he had committed, he taxed him roundly for his contempt to so great a person as the earl of Pembroke.

"In good time, sir," said Thomas, "is not my lord of Pembroke of sufficient courage to undertake his own quarrels without the aid of such a swasher as thyself?"—"Yes, certainly," replied Tuberville, "but thou art too much beneath his place and dignity, and he has left thy chastisement to me."

"Well, then," said Thomas, in excellent humour,

"if thou wouldst even have it so, where would it please thee that thou shouldst have me to school?"—"Where thou wilt, or dar'st," replied Tuberville.

"Thou comest here with harsh compliments," observed Thomas; "I am not ignorant, however, that as the acceptor of thy challenge, both time, place, and weapons, are in my choice; but I ween that it is not the fashion for scholars to appoint where their masters shall correct them." After this parley, Thomas fixed on Herefordshire as the scene of combat. Here the champions met accordingly; when, at the first pass, Thomas unhorsed his adversary, and cast him to the ground, and by the fall broke his back.

The amusement of men of gentle blood, as they were somewhat strangely called in this rude age, when not actually engaged in civil strife, seemed to be in fierce personal encounters. The next engagement of this kind was in Merionethshire, with David Gough, when Thomas ap Gruffydd killed his antagonist. Having afterwards thrown himself on the ground to rest, without his armour, he was treacherously run through the body by one of his enemy's retainers.

Thomas ap Gruffydd's two elder sons, Morgan and David, became, immediately on their father's decease, warm partisans, on opposite sides, of the two rival houses of York and Lancaster,—and both perished in that murderous warfare.

The inheritance now descended to Rhys ap Thomas, whose first act when he came into possession of the estate, was to put an end to the feuds which had subsisted between the family of Court Henry and his own, by a marriage alliance with Eva, the daughter and

heiress of Henry ap Gwylim of that house. By this judicious measure, he added to his possessions a property not much inferior to his own original patrimony. His establishment and hospitality were in every respect suitable to his immense wealth, and displayed the magnificence of a prince, rather than that of a private gentleman. He acquired unbounded popularity, and by degrees very formidable power, by re-establishing the games and institutions of his country on different parts of his estates in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, and by training the young men to the use of all kinds of arms, under the guise of sham fights and military spectacles.

But to return to more historical details. The fatal battle of Tewkesbury was fought on the 3rd of May, 1471, and by its decisive character seemed to put an end for the present to the hopes of the house of Lancaster. Queen Margaret, whose sagacity and courage had been the guide and stay of her party, was a prisoner in the Tower, and the young prince of Wales, her son, had been inhumanly butchered before the face of the Plantagenet king, for having given a reply worthy of the spirit and magnanimity of his mother. Twelve pitched battles had been fought during this sanguinary contest of the White and Red Roses. In these battles, and on the scaffold, above sixty princes of the royal families, above one-half of the nobles and principal gentlemen, and above one hundred thousand of the common people of England, had lost their lives. The bloody and luxurious reign of Edward IV. was terminated almost prematurely by a death brought on by dissipation and mental remorse; and that of his

successor, Richard the Third, was ushered in by a tragedy of the most dismal and savage character, when the two young princes, the children of the late king, were barbarously murdered in the Tower, to make way for Gloucester's unjust and violent assumption of the crown.

The defection of the duke of Buckingham from the cause of Richard the Third had once more raised the hopes of the house of Lancaster, when it became of great consequence to gain the adherence of so powerful a chieftain as Rhys ap Thomas, especially as he held the command of the western coast of Wales and the surrounding district. The king, suspicious of the fidelity of his subjects, sent his commissioners to Rhys, amongst others, to exact an oath of fidelity, which, though somewhat offended at the jealousy manifested by Richard in its requirement, he took without hesitation.

"I would have the king to know," said Rhys to the commissioners, "that such suspicions on the part of princes, might read, to some of fickle minds and unstable thoughts, evil lessons against themselves; for myself, I protest to his majesty that whoever, ill-affected to the state, shall dare to land in these parts of Wales where I have any command, must resolve with himself to make his entrance and irruption over my body."

Not far from the little town of Llandilo Vawr, at the eastern extremity of a fine lake, stood the Abbey of Talley, a name which it derived from its locality.* Its abbot was a zealous partisan of the earl of Richmond, and the intimate friend of Rhys. Plotting, wily, and

* Tal y Llychau, the head of the lakes.

persevering, he sought to gain him over to the cause of the Tudor, by alarming his fears at the suspicious and sanguinary character of Richard; insinuating at the same time that the visit of the commissioners was an indication that he had already become an object of the tyrant's jealousy and hatred. He succeeded after some time in creating distrust and apprehension in the mind of Rhys, and by the application of that subtle casuistry in which the pious churchmen of those days were eminently skilled, he silenced his scruples as to his oath and his declaration of loyalty.* The abbot avowed his attachment, and that of his neighbour, the bishop of St. David's, to the interest of the house of Lancaster, and he was not long in obtaining from Rhys assurances of support in the same cause.

It was rather more than eleven years after the decisive battle of Tewkesbury, when Henry, earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII. of England, landed at Milford Haven, with a small band of French auxiliaries, to make a desperate, and, as it should then seem, with such inadequate means, a fruitless effort to dethrone the tyrant of York, and to seize for himself the sceptre and crown of Britain. Rhys ap Thomas no sooner heard of the arrival of the French fleet in the bay, than, true to his promise, he ordered the beacon-fires to be lighted on all the neighbouring hills, as the preconcerted signal of the event, and hastened himself, with a noble band of chosen followers well mounted and

* A popular tradition in the neighbourhood asserts, that Rhys satisfied his conscience by remaining under a small bridge while the earl of Richmond passed over. This was doubtless one of the expedients suggested by the worthy abbot.

armed, to greet him. The rendezvous of the partisans of the house of Lancaster was at Shrewsbury, whither Rhys repaired with a select body of two thousand horse, chosen from the flower of his attendants. The armies of the contending parties marched to meet each other, and the important day was fast approaching which should lay for ever one of the contending factions in the dust. It was Sunday morning when Richard moved his long array through the streets of Leicester, to the sound of martial music, with the kingly crown upon his head, and pitched the tents of his disciplined troops, in the evening of the same day, on the field of Bosworth. Richmond was already in the field, and so nearly encamped to his enemy, that many of the disaffected in the tyrant's army came over, and joined him in the darkness of the night. The gathering hosts had mustered by early dawn at their appointed posts. The war-cry of the conflicting Roses was once more raised on the peaceful plains of merry England; and a fearful contest, such as when men fight for a crown and kingdom, marked the progress of that fatal day.

Richard, in the heat of the battle, made a desperate plunge at the earl of Richmond; Brandon and Cheyne, and many a high-born gentleman, fell before the shock of his fierce encounter. Nothing could resist the fury of his onslaught. He had nearly reached the spot where Richmond stood, when Rhys saw the peril which the earl's life was in, and mounting his favourite charger, Grey Fetterlocks, which he always reserved for great emergencies, with Sir William Stanley, flew to his rescue. The gallant Welshman encountered the king hand to hand, and after a desperate struggle, slew him.

Richmond was hailed king on the field of battle by his victorious army, and Stanley placed the crown of England on his brow. It was in the calm evening twilight of that tumultuous day when Rhys, Stanley, and the king met together in the tent of the fallen tyrant.

"You have both done bravely, my gallant friends," said the king; "this well-fought field is yours. This day will heal, I trust, the distractions of this unhappy country. Rise, Sir Rhys ap Thomas," he said to the kneeling warrior, "the honour of knighthood is justly thine; and hereafter, in token of this day's service, and the life that I owe to thy valour, I shall call thee Father Rhys." The two knights divided the spoil of the tyrant's tent.

Sir Rhys ap Thomas maintained the fame of his high character in all the bitter conflicts of the reign of Henry VII. He was created a Knight Banneret, loaded with honours, and had conferred upon him the government of Wales. He attended his sovereign in the expedition to France, and took part with the besieging army at Boulogne. When peace was concluded with Louis XI., that artful monarch sent a pension of two hundred marks to Sir Rhys, as he had done to most of Henry's counsellors. Sir Rhys, considering it only in the shape of a bribe, indignantly spurned the offer. "Tell thy master," said he to the messenger, "that if he intends by this to relieve my wants, he has sent too little; but if he proposes to corrupt my mind or stagger my fidelity, his kingdom would not be enough."

The reign of Henry VII., though comparatively

peaceful, gave rise to two extraordinary impostures, in the pretensions of Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck to the crown of England. In the severe conflicts of Stoke and Blackheath, which were the consequence, Sir Rhys bore a distinguished part. In the first, the eager valour of the Welsh hero had nearly cost him his life; for, pressing forward before his men in an encounter with one of the Irish commanders, he was beset by several of the enemy, and only rescued from destruction by the timely aid of the earl of Shrewsbury, who flew to his assistance. After the battle the king, who had been informed of his narrow escape, addressed him jocularly—"How now, Father Rhys, how likest thou the entertainment here? Whether is it better, eating leeks in Wales, or shamrocks among the Irish?" "Both, certainly, but coarse fare," replied Rhys; "yet either would seem a feast with such a companion," pointing gratefully to the earl who had rescued him.

In the succeeding reign of Henry VIII. he was equally distinguished. He possessed the Justiciaryship of the Principality, and gained great honours at the sieges of Tiruenne and Tournay, where he commanded the light horse. On his return he was invested with the office of Seneschal and Chancellor of the manors of Haverfordwest and Rhos, in Pembrokeshire. The latter days of the old warrior were spent in the peaceful retirement of Carew Castle, amidst the mimic exhibitions of those martial spectacles the sanguinary realities of which had engaged and delighted his active life, and in the pageants and festivities of St. George, the patron saint of the order to which he belonged, which he celebrated with a splendour and magnificence

that has become matter of history. In the year 1527 the veteran knight sunk to rest, and the holy fathers of the Priory of Carmarthen chanted "*requiescat in pace*" over the mortal remains of

Sir Rhys ap Thomas.

CHAPTER XV.

PEMBRE HILL—LLANELLY—SWANSEA—NEATH—MARGAM
—BRIDGEND—COWBRIDGE—LLANDAFF—CAERPHILLY.

Where'er we gaze around, above, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonize the whole:
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed cataract doth roll,
Between these hanging rocks that shock, yet please the soul.
CHILDRE HAROLD.

THE heavy mists were still lingering over the stream of the Gwendraeth when I took up my light scrip, and departed from Kidwelly over the dreary swamp that interposes between that little town and the elevated district of Pembre Hill, the highest mountain-range in the south of Carmarthenshire. Having crossed Spudder Bridge, and ascended the hill immediately beyond it, I stood for a while upon its summit, to contemplate a scene the most expansive and enchanting that could fall within the range of the human vision. The thick vapours had rolled away from mountain, dale, and river, and the bright rays of a morning sun had lighted

up every object of interest far and near. On one side stretched Carmarthen Bay, glittering in radiant sunshine, with the distant points of Caldy Island and Giltar Head, and farther out the wide expanse of the Bristol Channel; on the south, looking over the peninsula of Gowerland and the Bay of Swansea, the bluff coast of Devon and Somerset formed the extreme line of the horizon. North-easterly lay the length and breadth of Carmarthenshire, with its quiet vales and shining rivers, having in the back-ground the broken chain of mountains which skirts the borders of the county from Brecknockshire to the sea. I know not how it is, and it does not enter into the philosophy of a wanderer upon the earth's surface, like myself, to explain it, but I always feel the current of pleasant thought repulsed when I turn from the delightful survey of that which is grand and beautiful in nature, to the contemplation of scenes in which the strength and ingenuity of man is taxed and wasted for the acquisition of sordid gain, and that too, it may be, amid the poisonous exhalations of the mine, or the no less injurious vapours of the heated furnace; and so it was in this case. I slowly and lingeringly withdrew from the enchantments of Pembre Hill, and threaded my way through the dirty streets of Llanelly, amidst the smoke of coalpits and smelting-houses that almost darkened the air. I stopped not to examine the miserable ruins of its castle, or the embattled tower and tapering spire that at once arise from its single church, or the traces that are still left to identify it as the ancient Roman station of Leucarium; but pursued my way across the ferry of the Loughor, that here empties itself into the

Burry Creek, till I reached, in somewhat of a fretful and melancholy mood, the busy port of Swansea, that stands in the dip of its beautiful bay.

Swansea, or, as it was anciently called, Abertawe, from the junction of the Tawe with the sea, "or, in Saxon, Swinesey, of the sea-porkes," stands on the western side of that river, which is here navigable for ships of large burden. The bay has been said to rival that of Naples, from its beautiful undulating line and capacious basin; and the town is seen to great advantage from it. The castle asserts its existence by one solitary quadrangular tower, with its range of light circular arches surrounding the top, peering from the mass of houses that have choked it up nearly on all sides. It has also the remains of its eastern wing, part of which is in desolation, and part advantageously converted into excellent shops and respectable domestic habitations. This castle was built by the Norman leader Henry Beaumont, earl of Warwick, the conqueror of Gowerland. Swansea, or its immediate district, is *supposed* to have given birth to Gower, one of the fathers of British poetry, and the contemporary of Chaucer, in the rudest ages of its literary history; but it was *actually* the birthplace of Nash, better known as Beau Nash, so long the *arbiter elegantiarum* of Bath. It was also the place of banishment of the unfortunate and wayward poet Savage.

The sweep of Swansea Bay comprehends many objects of great interest. In an angle formed by the indentation of its bending shore, about five miles from the town, stand the remains of Oystermouth Castle. This fortress occupies a gentle eminence close to the



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THE FLEET OF THE FLEET.

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shore, and belonged from a remote period to the lords of Gower. Its walls are still nearly entire, and bear traces of the bastions and turrets which defended them. To add to its strength and importance, tradition relates that a subterraneous communication was made between this castle and that of Swansea. Its bold and majestic ruins are now a mark for the fisherman as he guides his little skiff homewards over the waters.

The pleasant village of the same name spreads its scattered habitations on the declivity of the hilly range near which the castle stands, under the shadow of a limestone rock, and reaches to the dry and somewhat elevated part of the beach within the Mumble's Point. This latter object is a bold rocky projection, running some distance into the sea, and bears the Pharos of that part of our island coast which is washed by the waters of the Bristol Channel. Its dazzling light can be seen at a great distance by the mariner, and has been his guide and beacon on many a dark and stormy night. There is something more than ordinarily interesting in this object of man's creation, and as the Wanderer's eye took in its towering height, he contemplated it as a grateful illustration of the intelligence and benevolence of his race. There it stood, with its firm foot on the rock, unshaken amidst the wildest blast, and throwing its light upon the trackless waves, when the heavens themselves were covered with blackness,—seeming like the Genius of Mercy, sending her voice booming upon the waters, to warn the wayfarer from the perils of the coast.

At a short distance from this place are the weather-beaten ruins of Pennarth Castle, standing on a rocky

cliff, at the extremity of a barren sandy heath, and still further on, to the northward, those of Penrice. In the same direction, and far beyond these ruins, rises the high mountain of Cefn Bryn,—the ridge of the mountain,—with its immense cromlech, called Arthur's Stone, composed of a very hard *lapis molaris*; underneath, it is said, there was formerly a spring of clear water, called Our Lady's Well, which used to ebb and flow with the tide of the sea. A little below are the remains of the castellated mansion of Oxwich, built on the shore of the small bay of that name, about the middle of the sixteenth century. The view is terminated by the promontory of Wormshead and Llanmadoc Hill, on which in centuries past the Roman sentinel held his watch, and of whose encampment time has not yet destroyed all the traces.

But the Wanderer's way held not to these places. Leaving Swansea and Gowerland, which forms this interesting peninsula, on the west, formerly peopled by a colony of Flemings, whose successors are still distinguished by their dialect and provincial dress, called the Gower Whittle, his path stretched towards the east, in a direction nearly parallel with the coast, describing something like a half-circle from Neath to Caerphilly, and including within these points many subjects of great natural beauty, the ruins of many ancient fortresses, and the convenient towns of Bridgend, Cowbridge, Cardiff, and Llandaff.

The little borough of Neath, formerly the Nidum of Antoninus, offers but few attractions to claim the attention of the traveller. The river bearing the same name is here crossed by a stone bridge, which marks the

boundary of Gowerland. This stream, in its passage from the romantic region amidst the Brecknock hills, in which it takes its rise, flows through one of the most picturesque valleys in South Wales, and, after being swollen by the Dulas, and other tributary waters, empties itself into the Bay of Swansea. Old Giraldus "sayeth that the Neath is ful of daunger, by reason that it aboundeth with quicke sandes more than any other ryver in Wales, in so much as scarcely the countymen may guyde a man safely over it." The dangers of the chronicler's time are however past, and the bridge affords a sure footing to the traveller, and the swift and swelling waters appear to have swept away the quicksands. The ruins of the abbey, called by Leland,—*"the fairest in Wales,"* at a little distance from the place; and of the castle, which was a Norman fortress, are inconsiderable, and too much disfigured by the dense atmosphere to invite attention. The former, however, possesses some historical interest, from having been the sanctuary of Edward II. when pursued by his cruel consort Isabella and her confederates, *"wheare,"* as Sir Thomas More says, *"he lurked for a tyme, beinge put in comferte by the Welshmen that he should abyde theare unespied, which notwithstanding weare in thende hyred for Judas's rewarde, to betraye him, theyr soveraigne maister."* This refuge only delayed for a while the fatal catastrophe that awaited the fallen monarch within the gloomy dungeons of Berkeley Castle.

Emerging from the cloudy canopy that seems to cover Neath, I pursued my route by Eagle's Bush, an agreeable situation upon some high ground, near the road to Britton Ferry, a place of rare beauty, close by

the estuary of the Neath. The river here rolls in rapid current along its ample channel, by the western boundary of the ornamented grounds, as if in haste to mingle itself with the waters of the bay. The summits of the rocky shore which front the sea, are clothed with forests of fine oak and other trees, and the line of verdant beauty descends gradually and gracefully to the river's brink, shutting in the fairy region from the rough blasts that sweep across the Bristol Channel. The varied nature of the grounds, now elevated into swelling hills, now gently subsiding into rich and fertile valleys, interspersed with gay flowering knolls of myrtle and magnolia, which the mildness of the climate permits to grow in the open air, with the perpetual change which masses of thick umbrageous trees, secluded dingles, and open meadows afford, render this a scene of perfect enchantment. The village churchyard close at hand, that peaceful resting-place, combines its picturesque effect and its soothing melancholy reflections to unite sentiment with scenery, and to render the landscape complete, by mingling the heart's finest, dearest emotions with Nature's choicest beauties.

I constrained myself to leave this attractive place; for the lengthening shadows reminded me that I had yet to pass some distance before the pilgrimage of the day was ended. I lingered, however, on the road, about the delightful retreat of Bagland, where the poet Mason composed his celebrated elegy on the death of Lady Coventry. Would the reader know what detained the foot of the Wanderer in this fascinating spot, gazing fixedly, as if buried in some abstract speculation,

though the twilight shades of the evening were warning him, by their deepening hues, of the coming darkness? His mind had caught the thread of long-lost recollections. It had conjured up the gentle form of that Gleaner* among many lands, whose rich voice and tender tones he had heard in by-gone days, giving a melancholy and thrilling emphasis to those thought-creating lines—

"Yes, Coventry is dead! Attend the strain,
Daughters of Albion! ye that, light as air,
So oft have tript in her fantastic train,
With hearts as gay, and faces half as fair."

Leaving Bagland with all its associations, I hastened my steps as rapidly as possible through the dirty village of Aberavon, in no mood to examine the fragments that yet remain of its fallen castle, and while the last rays of the great luminary still lingered on the edge of the magnificent hills that formed the back-ground of Margam Park, I entered that quiet village, and took up my abode at the little inn that hangs out its invitation to the weary traveller.

Nothing can exceed the rural beauty of the modest hamlet of Margam, with its peaceful sanctuary occupying, as it does, the green valley at the base of the majestic mountain-steep of Mynydd Mawr, clothed with verdant oaks to its very summit, and breasting with unrivalled grandeur the wild waves that sweep along the Bristol Channel. To the left of the village, and at a very short distance from it, spread the grounds and gardens of Margam Park, sharing alike the seclusion of the

* Mr. Pratt, author of "Gleanings through Westphalia, Holland, and Wales," and many excellent poems.

valley, and the shelter of the same lofty range of waving woods. This place boasts one of the finest greenhouses in the kingdom, which contains the splendid collection of orange and lemon trees brought from Italy, by Sir Henry Wootton, as a present to King Charles I. The vessel in which it was freighted was wrecked on this estate nearly two centuries ago, and the plants were preserved, to be restored to the royal owner; but the troubles of that period prevented this from being done, and they were afterwards confirmed to the present possessor by Queen Anne. At either end of the building are two superb saloons, in which are placed several rare specimens of antiquity, some splendid vases, and precious subjects of sculpture. I turned from this magnificent orangery, glowing with a harvest of yellow fruit, and filled with an atmosphere of perfume, to ruminate amongst the remains of the celebrated abbey which the park incloses. Nearly seven centuries have rolled away since it was first erected by Robert, earl of Gloucester, for the Cistercian brotherhood. It is said that Edward II. took refuge in this hospitable place before he returned to Neath. Traces of its ancient foundation have been discovered, which display the extent and magnificence of the building. The elegant Chapter House, "that justly admired Gothic gem," with its fine proportions, and central clustered columns sustaining its vaulted roof, has been the last to fall beneath the ravages of time. All is now in complete ruin, and the gigantic remains that lie prostrate here and there, are overtopped by the long grass, while the gay valerian and snapdragon unite their red and violet tints, with many-coloured wild flowers, as if

in triumph over the cloistered walls and mural fragments of the ancient abbey. Margam lay in the track of the preachers of the crusade, and was visited by Baldwin in his itinerary through Wales. Giraldus speaks of the monks as being, at that time, more celebrated for their charitable deeds than any other of that order in Wales, and as a reward for such benevolence, in a season of famine their corn and provisions were, by divine assistance, increased like the "widow's cruise of oil." In this abbey King John and his army were entertained on their passage to Ireland, and out of gratitude for this hospitality, the abbey was exempted from the contribution which he imposed upon all other religious houses in the kingdom.

I now followed the umber line of the sylvan path that leads through the overhanging woods to the mountain-top, to survey the manifold beauties that spread on all sides in the valley beneath; while the vestiges of the little oratory on the hill, the convent of Eglwys Nunydd, that once shared the companionship of the abbey, but now transformed into a respectable farmhouse with the mouldering antiquities, monastic and Roman, scattered plentifully around this district, engaged with peculiar interest all my antiquarian lore. The present parish church, which formed part of the ancient monastic building attached to the abbey, is spoken of by that learned antiquary Sir R. C. Hoare, as "a most beautiful and unadulterated specimen of Norman architecture in its interior, as well as in its western front. The external façade," he says, "is more decorated in its architecture than Ewenny, and bears the mark of much earlier antiquity than any

part of the adjoining abbey which is now extant. It is rich also in monumental antiquities. On the south side of the choir is a chapel crowded with sculptured memorials of the Mansel family, whose effigies are in general well executed, and the features in a good state of preservation."

I left Margam reposing under the shadow of its own wood-crowned hill, and directed my steps towards Bridgend, which I intended to make my resting-place for the night. My road lay through the little village of Pyle, and by the excellent inn of that place. On my left rose the mountain-ridges of Mynydd Blyden, and on my right, Kenfig, with its singular geologic lake of pure fresh water, its sandy desert heath, and its castle ruins, and beyond, the ever-rolling waters of the deep blue sea.

Branching off from the main road, I entered the little straggling town of Bridgend, which spreads itself on either side of the Ogmore. The names which its separate townships bear of Old and New Castle, are almost the only records of the existence of the two fortresses that once belonged to this place. These had their reference to a former age, and both the mural structures and their memorials have perished. But Bridgend and its vicinity possess an interest in being the birthplace of two eminently literary and excellent men, Dr. Price and Mr. Morgan, well known for their several works on mathematics, natural philosophy, and ethics.

The sun had long passed his meridian, when I left Bridgend to visit Ewenny priory and church. The remains of the former stand in a meadow bordering the narrow stream of the same name, which empties itself

into the Ogmores a little further on. Ewenney Priory has still its strong embattled walls and towers, or, at least, such portions of them as give some idea of their former massiveness, and plainly indicate that they were not meant only to afford seclusion to their devout inmates, but security, also, in days of lawless violence and strife. Seen, as they were, amidst the surrounding and intermingling trees, with a fine western sun gleaming through them, they formed together beautiful subjects of light and shade; the grey walls finely contrasting with the pale green and coloured leaves, which flickered in the gentle breeze, turning aside the level beams of pleasant sunshine, or breaking their straight lines into a thousand fragments of light. The hall is nearly entire, and, with the remaining ruins, affords the best example of the ancient monastic style that is to be met with in the Principality. The church, which has remained almost unaltered since the days of Giraldus, and which is still used as a place of religious worship, is cruciform in its shape, and its heavy circular arches, resting on thick, bulky, clustered columns, with simple and uniform capitals, proclaim its early Norman architecture and high antiquity. It has many monuments and rudely-sculptured effigies, with still ruder and imperfect devices and inscriptions; but all tending to show its existence in the times of the first Norman adventurers. I lingered till evening twilight amidst these shades of by-gone days; and nightfall had nearly surprised me among their crumbling ruins. As I turned away from these ancient piles, the church, which was still the house of prayer, and the ruins which once formed the sanctuary of the holy brotherhood of

St. Benedict,—and emerged again into the open road, it seemed as if the spell, which had long held me in communion with the spirits of departed ages, was broken: and I hurried on to mingle again with my living fellows, and to find, in the quiet hostelry of the little town at hand, the rest which a day of travel and research had prepared me to enjoy.

The revenues of Eweny Priory were granted at the dissolution in Henry the Eighth's time to Sir Edward Carne, an eminent civilian. Burton relates that this gentleman was despatched to Rome on the subject of the king's divorce, and fulfilled his mission with great courage and ability. He was a great favourite afterwards with Queen Mary, and became her ambassador to the Pope; and in the reign of her successor, Elizabeth, he was commanded to seek an audience at the Vatican to announce her succession to the crown. The intelligence was received contumeliously by his Holiness, by whom Sir Edward was forbidden to exercise his office as ambassador, and under pain of excommunication not to go out of Rome, but to take upon himself the government of the English Hospital in that city, where he died in 1651.

With the early dawn on the following morning I was upon the road for Cowbridge, through a district rich in interest to the naturalist and antiquary. Receding to the north-east in its hilly retreat, and dimly seen amongst the intermingling trees, stands the village of Coity, with its extensive and interesting castle remains, and historical associations. On my right and left, at varied distances, were the ruins of many ancient for-

tresses, Norman and British, relieved by some elegant mansions of modern erection, smiling in their freshness and youth. Among the latter rose Dunraven Castle, on the rocky promontory of the seashore, one hundred feet in height, commanding a magnificent view of the ocean, rolling in its majesty, or broken into angry surf by the rocks which line the shore. The present castellated mansion occupies the site of the ancient structure. In the old Welsh histories this place is called Dindryfan Castle, and was probably the most ancient edifice of the kind in Wales. It is said to have been the residence of Caradoc, the celebrated Caractacus of British history, and of his father, Brân ab Llyr. After the capture of Caractacus it ceased to be the residence of the reguli of this district. At the Norman Conquest it fell to the share of William de Londres, who afterwards gave it to his butler, for his gallant defence of the fortress from the attacks of the Welsh. The lord of the pantry became thus the lord of "the Castle and Manor of Dunraven," under the style and title of Sir Arnold Butler. There is a dismal story connected with the former edifice, which, after having lived through the most hostile periods of British history, fell by succession into the hands of the last of the Vaughans. When the storm raged on that coast, this unprincipled wretch used to put up false lights, and adopted other devices to deceive and mislead the mariner, that he might reap the harvest of a wreck upon his inhospitable manor. His crime was distinctly marked by Heaven in its punishment. His three sons were all drowned. Two of them perished on a lone rock in the

sea before his eyes. This fatal catastrophe rendered the place hateful to him, and he hastily sold his possession and left it for ever.

Farther on are the remains of St. Donatt's Castle, surrounded by ancient woods, which prevent them from being seen except from the high grounds in the immediate neighbourhood. St. Donatt's had its towers and bastions, and curtained walls of sufficient strength and proportion, as its massive fragments attest, to maintain its importance and value in a land wrested from the hands of its ancient possessors, and filled with the violence of arbitrary and lawless power, and rife in insurrection and perpetual civil contest. But the lords of St. Donatt's combined the luxury with the fiercer passions, of that rude age. The castle had its terraced gardens, connected with each other by broad flights of stone steps, reaching from the fortress walls to the waters of the Bristol Channel; and its broad avenues, in which the rich shade of the clustering oaks singularly, but not ungracefully, combined with the fanciful, half-military, garden architecture that prevailed in those times. It was this peculiar style which preserved such a dignified and feudal air throughout the grounds devoted to ornament and pleasure in the domains of our ancestral nobility. This edifice was erected in the time of William Rufus, and formerly belonged to Sir William le Stradling; and was the seat of the family for nearly 700 years. In the park are the remains of a quadrangular tower, which tradition states to have been used for the purpose of discovering vessels in distress upon this rocky coast, in stormy weather. Still farther on the road is the site of St. Quintin's Castle, a name

once formidable amongst the Norman adventurers that overran this part of the Principality; what remains of the building is now converted into the humble but useful purpose of a barn.

Cowbridge is a little town, containing a handsome church, and a town hall, where the quarter sessions are held, and an excellent grammar-school, endowed by Sir Llewelyn Jenkins, secretary of state to James II. It is seated in a low bottom, in the midst of a fertile tract of country. It formerly bore the name of Pont Vaen, so called from the stone bridge which crosses the river intersecting the little town, as it hurries on to fall into the sea at a short distance from the place. Robert de Quintin, one of the companions in arms of the Norman adventurer Fitzhammon, surrounded this town with a stone wall. A bold Gothic gate on the south, in tolerable condition, still remains to attest the truth of this fact. I entered Cowbridge as the good housewife began to ply her daily task, and, after refreshing myself with an excellent Welsh breakfast, prepared to pursue my way to Cardiff and Llandaff. On the left of the little town, and overlooking the rich fertile vale of Cowbridge, stands Penline Castle, boldly seated on the lofty summit of a mountainous ridge that comprehends in its crescent the two extremities of Tre-fychan and Coed y Stanby, and commanding a prospect of uncommon diversity and extent. Beneath lie, stretched as on a map, the luxuriant lowlands in all their picturesque variety of shade and colour, of green meadows and fields of ruddy brown, bounded by the distant hills of Trebellin and Coed y Brain; and far off, at the extremity of vision, the magnificent mountains that rise in the very heart

of the wildest region of Glamorganshire; on the south, the shining waters of the Bristol Channel, to the iron-bound coast of Ilfracombe and Somersetshire.

Cardiff is a name derived from the situation of this town on the Taff, which runs along the west side, and falls into the sea three miles below it. Burton calls it, "the fairest town of all South Wales!" Cardiff was in ancient times alternately under the British, Roman, and Norman sway, and was then, as now, a place of considerable importance. It possessed a fortified castle, which was surrounded with embattled walls, having five gates of entrance, of which there are still some remains. It owes its erection to Fitzhammon, after he and his adventurous knights had conquered the county of Glamorgan in the twelfth century. It was the scene of that tragical story which is related of Robert, the eldest son of the Norman conqueror of England, who was cheated alike by his two younger brothers, Rufus and Henry, of his crown and kingdom, and by the latter deprived of his sight, and barbarously immured in one of the dismal dungeons of this place. Matthew Paris has a curious tradition respecting this illustrious prisoner, which he tells in these words:—"During his Imprisonment, it happened that Henry, his Brother, and then Kinge, had brought him upon a Feast Daye in the Morninge, a Scarlet Garment to pull on, with a Cape for the Heade, as the Manor then was, which, as he assayed, he found it to straigthe in the Cape, inso-muche that he brake a Stitche or twoe in the Seame, and castinge it aside, he bad his Gentleman give it his Brother Robert; for his Head (quoth he) is less then myne. The Garment was brought him, and, when he

sawe it a litle torne, he demaunded how it happened that it was not sowed; the Gentleman told the Trouthe, which as he understode, he fell into a great melancholy, sayinge: And dothe my Brother make me his Bedeman, in that he sendethe me his cast Clothes? Then have I lyved to longe. And he so tormented himselfe with Sorrowe, that he would never after receyve Sustenance, but pyned in this Pryson." Lambarde relates "that in the variance betwene Henry III. and his nobilitye, this castle was besieged, and Warine Basset, a nobleman, receyved his deathe there." In the time of the civil wars between Charles and his Parliament, it was assaulted by Cromwell, and bravely defended by the royalist garrison. It fell at last by treachery into the hands of the republican forces. A deserter from the fortress, acquainted with a secret subterraneous pass that led immediately underneath the river into the open country,—and which, as was usual with the fortresses of that age, had been formed for the purpose of introducing supplies into the garrison,—silently guided a strong party of the besieging army, in the dead of the night, into the castle, who surprised and overpowered its gallant defenders. Cromwell, with his accustomed decision, after he had taken possession of the place, hanged the traitor, as an example to his own troops. The western wing still preserves its ancient baronial splendour, and contains a suite of magnificent apartments; but the rest of the building has been somewhat injudiciously repaired and modernized. The courtyards, with their surrounding walls, have disappeared, and in their open area have left the venerable keep, surmounting the elevated part of a smooth and

verdant lawn, still standing like the hoary witness of its eventful history—of its ancient strength and its strange vicissitudes. The mount from which the keep rises is of considerable height and breadth. I ascended to the summit by the winding path with which it is encircled, to enjoy the beautiful prospect of the surrounding country it affords, but principally to obtain a view of the picturesque ruins of Castle Coch, or the Red Castle, as it is termed in English, that rest on the top of a precipitous cliff, towards which converge the mountains that rise on each side of the Taff, leaving only a narrow pass that was effectually commanded by it. Castle Coch might be said almost to shut in the two valleys to the north and south, through which the river runs, and was, from its situation and strength, nearly impregnable. Its short history would carry back the reader to the twelfth century, in which its bristling ramparts were the last refuge of the liberties of Glamorganshire. Ivor, the son of Ceidivor, better known as Ivor Bach, or “the Little,” from the smallness of his stature, erected this castle, and assembled the bold and discontented spirits of his country, when their privileges and possessions had been invaded by the Norman knights, in the reign of William Rufus, and afterwards in that of his brother Henry. It was in this latter reign that the hero of the Red Castle on the Cliff made a daring and unexpected attack upon that of Cardiff, and took its commander, Robert, duke of Gloucester, the king’s son, prisoner, together with his wife, and carried them with him to his eyrie in the mountains. The liberties and immunities of the country were ceded as the price of the freedom of the

noble captives, nor were they released till these had been confirmed by the king's own hand. The antiquarian interest of Cardiff is confined to a few objects, amongst which are the fine church of St. John, of rich Norman architecture, and the trifling monastic remains of the Black and Grey Friars, founded by the descendants of the Conqueror. Cardiff has now become a place of constant visit to travellers in search of natural beauty, from its interesting local situation, and it is rising in commercial importance, owing to its connection with the mining, iron, and tin trades in the neighbourhood.

I had intended to have taken Llandaff into my day's wanderings, but I had lingered too long in the castle grounds amongst its many interesting objects, and on the ramparts, which are now tastefully planted with shrubs, and laid out in walks, contemplating the beautiful scenery of the surrounding country which they afford, that I was too wearied to proceed further; and I rested for the night in one of the excellent inns which this town possesses.

A morning's walk to the ancient city of Llandaff, distant from Cardiff rather more than two miles, was only a timely preparation to a hearty breakfast, which the little hostelry of the city amply provided for me. The gentle reader will, perhaps, be surprised at this singular association of terms, which convey at the same time the idea of metropolitan consequence with village humility; but the bishop's see has dwindled into an inconsiderable dependency upon its more youthful and vigorous neighbour, from whose markets its weekly supplies are derived.

Llandaff derives its name from the situation of the church on the banks of its river. Giraldus writes it "fanum super Taph," or "the church upon the Taf." However this place may have declined in social importance, it has that within it which fails not to arrest the foot of the traveller and the antiquary. Its cathedral, which is the great object of attraction, boasts of a date beyond that of the renowned king Arthur. Llandaff was almost the birthplace of British Christianity, and, so far back as the second century, it beheld a Christian church rise upon the banks of its own clear placid river. In the latter part of the fifth century it became a bishop's see. The funds for this purpose, Godwin says, were aided by "great summes of money," contributed in payment of a release from the fourth part of any penances inflicted upon the subscribers.

The present edifice was erected in the thirteenth century, by Bishop Urban, in a hollow surrounded by rising grounds, which gives it a solemn and monastic air. Its western front combines one of the finest specimens of the Norman, Saxon, and Gothic styles. It has a lofty square tower, profusely enriched with the best sculpture of the age in which it was built. The entrance to the north and south are pure Saxon. On account of the dilapidations of the ancient chancel, some alterations took place, not exactly in keeping with the fine architectural character of the original building. The cathedral contains some interesting monuments of bishops and warriors,—of the benevolent Christiana Andley,—and a solitary virgin that died of disappointed love; it also records a long array of dignitaries, two at least of whom may be said to be illustrious—William

Morgan, the first translator of the Old Testament into the Welsh language, and Richard Watson, distinguished for his erudition as a scholar, and for his eloquent advocacy of liberal political principles in the senate. Near the cathedral are some remains of the castellated palace of the bishop, which the wild Glyndwr destroyed during his ineffectual struggles for the liberties of his country.

The evidences of departed men and ages which monumental records and architectural remains afford, have a natural tendency powerfully to affect the mind. There is what may, perhaps, be called a sensuality of feeling, in the combinations which the intellectual powers perform under the influence of these external objects. This mental revelling is sometimes created and coloured by the profusion of significant memorials,—sometimes by their immediate associations with a long train of stirring events,—and sometimes it is detained and exercised upon one simple fact, connected with the dimmest and most distant event of their history. In the present case, there was the old cathedral, with its wonderful records running through a period of nearly thirteen centuries,—its mailed warriors and mitred bishops thronging its silent walls, the effigies of beings once living upon this busy earth,—and there was an event anterior to all these, forming the most beautiful of pictures, in its primitive church,—and this was to me the most engaging of all,—rising on the banks of the tranquil waters, where the first Apostle lifted up his hands towards heaven, and declared to the half-savage people the deep and eternal truths of Christianity. What a rich store does the observant traveller, and the diligent reader, prepare for the exer-

cise and enjoyment of future days? It is one of the great peculiarities of our constitution that every object we look upon, or treasure up, furnishes materials for the intellect, which those two great alchemists, Memory and Imagination, reproduce upon all fitting occasions. There is scarcely any picture called forth by these faculties, belonging to earthly things, but what is composed of these old materials, blended and worked out into an infinite variety of forms. They rise, advance, and group themselves to the "music of memory," like the primogenial atoms in the fanciful theory of the philosopher of Samos. The words pronounced by the holy man on the banks of the Taff, were words of life. They were ordained to be the instruments by which men's minds were at once to be conquered, and the victory recorded. They were like the seeds carried by the pilgrim bird, and dropped upon the coral rock of the Indian Ocean,—germinating, fructifying, and reproducing their kind till the barren land became a grove of palm-trees, full of foliage and fruit, giving solace to the eye, and food to the taste; delighting the future voyager by their green beauty amidst the wide waste of waters.

" 'Tis a strange mystery, the power of words !
Life is in them, and death ! A word can send
The crimson colour hurrying to the cheek,—
Hurrying with many meanings ; or can turn
The current cold and deadly to the heart.
Anger and fear are in them ; grief and joy
Are in their sound ; yet slight, impalpable :—
A word is but a breath of passing air."

I was absorbed in these reflections when I found





CARTRIDGE.

myself, on the following morning, a wanderer on the almost pathless summit of Carreg Craig, amidst the wild and picturesque scenery of a mountainous region, with the gigantic ruins of Caerphilly Castle appearing in the distance before me.

The sun's broad rays were gleaming upon this ancient pile as I entered the castle inclosure on the eastward by the barbican, from which stretched, in a line with the boundary-wall to the right, a range of buildings which had been used as the barracks of the garrison. I passed through the grand gateway, with its two towers, into the ample courtyard, on the south side of which once stood in its glory the great hall of the castle. This magnificent apartment was of extraordinary dimensions, and was ornamented in the most elaborate architectural taste of the times. It had its four grand windows with pointed arches, ornamented with double rows of sculptured leaves and fruit. The side walls were decorated with clusters of round triplet pilasters, supported at the bottom with carved busts of exquisite and fanciful workmanship, from which sprang originally the vaulted arches of the roof. At the east end were two doors of the same pointed character, and between them a large arched window with delicate tracery and highly-finished carvings. Another apartment to the west corresponded with the great hall, but of smaller dimensions, and a third in continuation, which formed the anteroom at the head of the great staircase. The central buildings sustained at their south-east angle a round tower, which was used as the mint, and close by it another of nearly eighty feet in height, which, from some cause, has subsided into a

leaning position, and has been retained for centuries in this condition by the strength of the cement which holds its masonry together. From the top, down almost to the middle, runs a large fissure, by which the tower is divided into two separate parts, so that each side hangs over its base, in such a manner that it is difficult to say which is most likely to fall first. Mr. Wood, of Bath, more than sixty years ago, measured its lineal projection by lying on his back, and found its outer part standing eleven feet out of perpendicular, resting only on one part of its side. A long gallery connects the chambers with this part of the building. A lofty wall stretched its strong buttressed line all round, like a rampart of prodigious thickness, and of such extent as to inclose a large and open space of ground, through which ran a copious stream that supplied the garrison with water. This great outer wall was fortified with massy towers, at convenient distances, which communicated with each other by embattled galleries, and the whole strengthened by extensive out-works of bastions, moats, and other defences. This fortress, in its perfect state, included two miles within its outer moat, crossed by thirteen drawbridges. Even now, though ages have rolled away since the period when Caerphilly Castle was the scene of social habitation or of fierce contention, yet are its remains more entire in their connections, and more prodigious in their extent, than any that belong to the history of former times in Great Britain, resembling rather the ruins of a city than of a single edifice.

A peaceful monastery, belonging to the piety of the ninth century, and named after its founder, St. Cenydd,

first occupied the site of Caerphilly Castle. An irruption of the Mercian Saxons occasioned its destruction, and the first castle that was erected on its foundation was razed to the ground by Rhys Vychan, prince of South Wales, in the thirteenth century. In a few years afterwards it was rebuilt and fortified by the Norman, John de Breos. In the lapse of time it fell into the possession of the younger Spenser, the worthless favourite of Edward II., who greatly enlarged and strengthened it. During this reign it was the refuge of this weak monarch, when pursued by his queen, Isabella, and his rebellious barons, and stood a siege of the most desperate and obstinate nature. The means by which it was taken, and the adventures of the unfortunate monarch, as related by tradition, throw an air of interest and marvel over this part of its history. The besieging army had for some time been employing all the engines of destruction they possessed, but they found them too weak to make any impression against the massy walls, whilst the soldiers were mortally wounded by the shower of molten iron thrown down upon them. At last a battering ram of huge dimensions, suspended upon a frame supported by twenty large oaks, and moved forward by a thousand men, with muffled feet, in the dead of a dark night, effected a practical breach in the walls. Tremendous large fires, throwing the castle into view as distinct and clear as in daylight, which it took a hundred teams to supply, were kept up to assist the besiegers in working this enormous engine. After the breach was made, the king escaped in the habit of a peasant, and to disguise himself more effectually, as well as to cut off the traces

of his retreat, he mingled for a while amongst the besiegers, assisting for some time, with great apparent zeal, in piling fuel upon the surrounding fires. He soon secretly withdrew from this employment, and in the midst of the dark and stormy night, pursued his way, and wandered on for twenty miles westward, through one of the mountainous outlets, for a whole day and night, without knowing the direction which he was taking, till he came to the parish of Langunnoyd. Hungry and worn down, on the second morning he hired himself as a cowherd or shepherd, at a farm that to this day is known by the tradition connected with it. After remaining there for some time, the farmer, finding him an awkward and ignorant fellow, and that he could make nothing of his services, dismissed him. From Langunnoyd the unfortunate monarch found his way to the sanctuary of Neath Abbey. The castle continued to remain in the possession of the family of the Spencers, but it had been so much injured by the many fierce attacks it had endured, that it was abandoned as a residence about the middle of the fourteenth century.

Owen Glyndwr took possession of it during the time of his contest for the sovereignty of Wales, and it is described even then, in its dilapidated state, as

"Gigantic Caerphilly, a fortress great in ruins."

CHAPTER XVI.

PONT Y PRYDD—YSTRAD-Y-FODWG—PONT NEATH

VAUGHAN—YSTRADFELLTE.

Methinks some musing Wanderer I see,
Weaving his wayward fancies. Round him, rock
And cliff, whose grey trees mutter to the wind,
And streams down rushing with a torrent ire :
The sky seems craggy, with her cloud-piles hung,
Deep-massed, as though embodied thunder lay
And darkened in a dream of havoc there.

R. MONTGOMERY.

THERE are few regions on earth that present more of the sublime and beautiful features of Nature, within the same compass, than are to be found among the mountains, hills, and valleys of the north of Glamorganshire.

The Taff, which rises in Brecknockshire, is an inconsiderable river till it enters the boundary of this picturesque county, and receives in succession several large streams. Its capacious channel lies deep within the mountainous ridges that intersect the county, and which shape its sinuous course in the most fantastic manner, creating as it flows rich and fertile valleys that seem to laugh with joy beside its fertilizing waters. At times, when some interposing rock obstructs its

progress, or confines it within a narrower compass, it frets and foams like a wrathful torrent; and then, again, when it escapes into a broader sweep, it rolls with a deep and placid tide till it washes the sides of that proud cathedral which rears its towers near the end of its course, and, at length, it buries itself in the undistinguished waters of the ocean at the bay of Cardiff.

It was now approaching that time of the year when the rich and mellow autumn was beginning to give indications of its proximity to a season of sterner and ruder character. I left Caerphilly sleeping beneath its mountain guards to the north and south, and passed through the gorge of the valley by the eastern outlet, ascending the side of the river towards Pont y Prydd, or, as it is more modernly denominated, New Bridge. The wind, as it swept through the opening in fitful gusts, plainly portended that I should experience a day of change. I wrapped my travelling-cloak closer round me, prepared for whatever storms I might have to encounter, and reached the object of my search just as the careering clouds opened out to a beam of light brighter than the day had hitherto afforded. Pont y Prydd is sometimes, and very truly, rendered in English, the "Bridge of Beauty." It is a perfect segment of a circle, and stretches its magnificent chord of one hundred and forty feet across the bed of the Taff, rising like a rainbow from the steep bank on the eastern side of the river, and gracefully resting on the western—the *beau idéal* of architectural elegance.*

* This extraordinary structure was erected by William Edwards, a common stonemason of the neighbourhood. This worthy man, by the



THE TWO MOUNTAINS.
Lake of the Two Mountains.



I left the contemplation of this wonder of the Principality, as it has been called, to visit the singular and picturesque waterfall about half a mile from Pont y Prydd; following a delightful little path shadowed by trees, formed underneath the jutting brow of Craig-yresg, which leads to it. The fall is not more than from eight to ten feet; but the craggy strata, over which it breaks, divide the stream into several volumes, which dash with considerable violence over the opposing barrier. The white foam and spray raised by the fall, harmonized beautifully with the mingled verdure that lined the dark banks of the river. From Pont y Prydd I turned my steps towards Pont Neath Vaughan, following the mountainous track to the westward, in preference to the main road through Aberdare, pursuing for a while the course of the Rhondda, which on one side forms a narrow vale, consisting merely of the road and a few fields, and on the other is bounded by perpendicular cliffs to the water's edge, surmounted at the top with the most majestic timber of the county.

At a short distance is the first waterfall on the Rhondda, which though not so magnificent as some in the northern part of the Principality, possesses a pecu-

force of his genius, and his indomitable perseverance, advanced from the commonest station to one of great respectability, and has left some of the finest examples of pontile architecture in the Principality to attest his talents. With his professional avocations he united the business of a farmer, and the sacred duties of an ordained dissenting minister. A similar instance of great natural talents, unassisted by the advantages of scientific education, is related by Mr. Coxe, of Ulric Grubenman, the obscure carpenter of the canton of Appenzel, who was the architect of the hanging bridge that crosses the Rhine at Schaffhausen.

bar charm in the undisturbed solitude that reigns around, broken only by the hoarse and ceaseless roar of the cataract, that, mingling with no living sound, imparts a reality to the loneliness which is most sensibly felt. Further on is a second waterfall, and not more than a quarter of a mile from this is a third; but they are both distinguished by natural characteristics in a great degree corresponding with the first, except in the increased grandeur of the latter, arising from its depth and greater volume of water. The course of the river is one of great beauty and variety: its stream is sometimes disturbed by rocks and inequalities at the bottom of the channel, and its waters are fretful, foamy, and turbulent; at others it is clear, placid, transparent, and deep. The rocky shore is for the most part either precipitously steep, or shelved, or broken and worn into fantastic shapes and figures; and occasionally, the banks on either side are lined with luxuriant oaks, that throw their branches midway on the stream. Not far from the last fall is the junction of the Rhondda-vawr and the Rhondda-fychan, where a bridge spans the opposing banks. Here I bent my steps up a steep and barren hill, and then continued my way at the foot of a high and rocky ridge, fashioned into a variety of forms by time and tempest. I had now entered fairly into this wild and mountainous region, where nature seemed to reign in stern and unbroken silence amidst her own eternal rocks. Not a human being beside myself appeared to be treading these solitudes, nor was there a habitation to be seen. On my left rose into gigantic stature the stupendous summits of Mynydd Cymmer and Mynydd Dinas, and receding from them

more easterly, the lofty ridge of Mynydd Glyn; on my right towered Cefn Rhondda and Cefn Gwngel, two elevated ranges of a still more magnificent character, embracing within their inclosure the stream of the lesser Rhondda, as it pursues its babbling course, amidst the green forests that line its banks, to its confluence with the Rhondda-vawr. Before me was Ystrad-y-fodwg,—the village of the green valley,—encircled with rocks, and environed with all the “wild pomp of mountain majesty.”

The road now descended the hill, and brought me again into connection with the Rhondda-vawr, which I crossed by the bridge that has been erected on this spot. I had for some time lost sight of this stream, while I was exploring my path amongst a labyrinth of rocks, but the river had found a humbler channel, through which it had made its way till we met again (not without pleasure on my part) at the bottom of the hill I had just descended. Here it escapes from the frowning cliffs and rocky towers that have for so considerable a part of its course traced their images in its clear transparent waters, while it fertilizes the vale of Ystrad-y-fodwg, giving richness and verdure up to the very feet of those majestic mountains that embrace it.

In these unfrequented regions, and especially after a fatiguing walk, with but a scantily supplied scrip, the sight of a wayside inn, even such as Ystrad-y-fodwg affords, is a subject of gratulation and delight, and I was not slow to enjoy its entertainments.

Several small rippling streams now descend from the mountains and form their junction with the river; the vale becomes less fertile, and more closely embraced by

the surrounding rocks, whose sides are, however, richly adorned with wood. Further on is a waterfall of great natural beauty, when seen in connection with the surrounding objects, though in itself but a miniature representation of the magnificence of many larger ones. From this point the Rhondda-vawr turns abruptly to the west, and forms two other falls near to Nantrhyd-y-cyllyll.

On the east, in a rocky region not far from Bwlch-y-lladron, a mountain-pass called by that name, rises the Rhondda-fychan, which, by the tributary contributions of six small rivulets, flowing from the surrounding heights, soon becomes a rapid river, sending its tide in a south-westerly direction towards its point of junction with the Rhondda-vawr. This latter has its birthplace about one mile distant from the source of the Fychan, near Craig-y-Llynn, the loftiest peak in Glamorganshire, at the foot of which it winds its devious course. Nothing can exceed the peculiar effect produced by the appearance of Craig-y-Llynn, which rises almost perpendicularly in towering sublimity at the end of the narrowing dell, through which the river finds its channel, and seems as if to deny all egress to the traveller's foot. The summit of the cliff is broad, fringed here and there with scanty verdure, towards which the cattle from the opposite side, with instinctive sagacity, had wandered, adding much to the picturesque character of the scene.

The path that leads out of the valley is by a difficult and winding ascent over a mountain to the right of Craig-y-Llynn. The craggy and broken rocks, the falling torrents, and the precipitous nature of some





View of the mountain from the camp

part of the road, rendered this one of the most fatiguing passages I had experienced during my Wanderings. To the left of the dell, Craig-y-Llynn recedes from its straight line and sweeps round an extensive space, and again projects as before, forming almost the figure of a horse-shoe. Upon the west horn of the cliff is Llynn Fach, a fine fresh-water lake of great depth and considerable extent, well stored with the fish usually found in these alpine situations. On the east horn, which rose near to the track over which I was clambering, is Llynn Fawr, another lake of larger size and similar quality. These basins of clear shining waters, stored with life, and almost inaccessible in their solitudes, were now before me; and on every side the prospect, from the commanding height I occupied, was sublime, romantic, and beautiful. In descending the mountain over a rough and dreary road, I reached the little hamlet of Rhydgroes, and thence pursued my way till I arrived fatigued, yet delighted, at Pont Neath Vaughan, where the welcome sign of the Angel beckons the weary traveller to stay. "Mine hostess" contrived to make the accommodations tolerably comfortable; it therefore became my head-quarters during the greatest part of my stay in this neighbourhood, from which I diverged to the varied and extraordinary scenery of the surrounding country.

The first visit I paid on the following morning was to the Vale of Neath, which stretches itself from the little village of my temporary sojourn, and extends southward about ten miles, varying in width from less than one to two or three miles. Though the Vale of Neath does not present so rich a scene of cultivation

as many other Welsh valleys, yet it possesses many subjects of great picturesque beauty. Seen as it was by me, after my late wandering amidst the untameable wildness of the Glamorganshire mountains, and enriched in effect by the many-coloured autumnal hues and the soft touches of the year's decline, it was in a peculiar degree both interesting and delightful. The vale exhibits several long reaches of quiet rural beauty, inclosed by two ranges of hills which run the whole extent, with occasional high rocks, feathered for the most part with forest foliage, and rearing above all their high and weather-beaten heads. Near the centre of the vale is the Melincourt Fall, a beautiful cascade, surrounded by romantic scenery; and at no great distance from it, the pleasing and richly-cultivated estate of Rheola. With the Vale of Neath I closed my pilgrimage of the day, proposing on the succeeding morning to commence my diurnal range with an inspection of the waterfalls near the village.

The Purthen river has its course on the west of Pont Neath Vaughan, at a short distance from which it forms its junction with the Neath-fychan. A line of high ground, at a little distance on either side, runs parallel with the river as far as Nant y Gwal. The right bank is richly clothed with timber of the finest growth, while the left presents its bold peaks in distinct contrast. Stretching at a distance to the north-west is the enormous ridge of Careg-llwyd, throwing its gigantic arms both east and west, and inclosing a large circular tract of elevated ground, near which the great Roman road of Sarn Helen traversed, crossing this tremendous ridge near the twin summits of Maes Gawnen.





THE FALLS OF THE GREAT FALLS

From the Great Falls of the Great Falls

The great fall on the Purthen,—which is called in the language of the country, Ysgwd Einon Gam,—Lame Einon's Waterfall—from the peculiarity of the situation, is not perceived or heard till the wanderer's foot has approached near to the high and rugged crag that beetles over the dark waters beneath. The effect is greatly heightened by the seclusion of the woody glen in which it unexpectedly opens upon the view, and the quiet path towards it through the green meadows of the valley. A perpendicular cliff rears its bold, frowning brow right in front of the cascade, like the moveless watcher of its ceaseless fall. On the right, and with an aspect less rugged and high, rises another cliff, as if in companionship with its gigantic neighbour : between the latter and the opposite rocks the river pours its rolling tide in one sheet of bright foaming water, to the distance of eighty feet. At the bottom of the taller cliff there is a profuse vegetation and some luxuriant trees ; while the sides of the lesser are completely clothed with verdure, and richly-coloured and delicately-tinted foliage. On the top, in majestic triumph and ineffable dignity, a single oak throws its broad arms over the falling waters, which from its size and moss-coloured trunk, must have been the associate of the stern cliff for many generations past.

The rocks on the opposite side are almost naked, with only here and there a few stunted shrubs which seem to struggle for existence in their occasional fissures ; but even these contribute to the richness of this beautifully-composed picture, by the variously-shaded horizontal lines of strata of which they are formed—by the rich and many-coloured mosses that cover them—

and by the fantastic, and in some instances, singularly-defined shapes that have been fashioned by the action of the air and water. In order to enjoy the subject to the fullest possible degree, I descended between the two cliffs, a somewhat perilous enterprise, which I accomplished by the aid of sundry rocky projections, broken tree-roots and trunks, and by swinging myself by the pendent branches from place to place, until I arrived safely at the bottom. The scene up the river is of unspeakable grandeur, and such as amply to repay the fatigue and hazard of the descent. The stern, primeval granite rocks, on the right, present their rude immovable features amidst the graceful, bending, richly-coloured foliage of the willow, the mountain ash, and the delicate birch, to the very water's brink; while the interstices are filled up with luxuriant creepers of all hues of green, and red, and blue, and yellow, which distinguish their leaves and flowers. On the left is the smooth, unbroken, rocky face of the mountain, which seems nearly to have forbidden the intrusion of all vegetable substances, except of the cryptogamia family, of which it supports numerous party-coloured tribes.

The lesser fall of the Purthen, which is to be found about half a mile nearer Pont Neath Vaughan, is but a mimic representation of the same romantic features which compose the greater, and is exceedingly beautiful of its kind.

Craig-y-Dinas rises at a short distance from Pont Neath Vaughan to the north-eastward, and is a bold precipitous limestone rock of great elevation, backed by the still higher land of Cilhepste-cerig. From the summit of this lofty crag I enjoyed a splendid prospect, looking down the lovely vale of Neath; comprehending



THE STORM - No. 10, 1845.

When the vale of Jordan and the North were calm.



in the nearer view to the right and left the wooded mountain-hollows of Cwm Melte and Cwm Carngust, sleeping in their solitary rock-environed retreats. Immediately below me flowed the small streamlet of the Sychrhid, or dry ford, as it is sometimes termed, which for a short space divides the counties of Brecknock and Glamorgan, and hurries by the foot of Craig-y-Dinas to join the Melte.

Eventide was now slowly approaching, and the distant prospects had already become dim and obscure, when I retraced my steps towards Pont Neath Vaughan. I lingered not to catch the little vignettes of natural beauty which every outlet offered to my sight; for the shadowy clouds, which had been chasing each other with rapid motion through the day, were gathering into broader masses. One cloud of a more ominous character than the rest, had for some time hung its dark shroud in the north-east, on the top of the lofty Cefn Cadlan. The wind sighed long and heavily through the mountain-chasm, or swept in fitful gusts along the high ridges and openings. Before I reached my home at the little inn, however, it had dropped into a treacherous calm. I was almost repining at the unnecessary haste with which I had quitted my prospect-ground on the hill, and abruptly interrupted that calm train of thought which takes possession of the mind as the fading landscape becomes less and less visible, and "the shapes of earth are passing still away," when I was startled by the fliekering, restless motion of the leaves, which indicated that secret agitation of the air that almost always precedes a storm. The dark cloud of the Cefn Cadlan, which had been for some time stationary, appeared to be disrupted from its pinnacle, and rolling

its surcharged body rapidly towards the village. I had scarcely entered, and bespoke the attentions of "mine host" to supply the wants which my long walk had created, when the elemental strife began. The thunder, which had sounded at a distance, approached fearfully near—it no longer maintained that majestic roll which fills the mind with awe and reverence, but burst with a crackling explosion, that, by its proximity, inspired terror and alarm. The forked lightning quivered in the welkin with awful velocity, and in almost unremitting succession, and seemed to light up all nature with an unearthly and spectral glow, by its "sulph'rous and thought-executing fires." The wind, which at the commencement of the storm had been uncertain and gusty, now increased to a wild hurricane; and the rain, instead of falling in large single drops as at first, soon descended in torrents.

"Since I was a man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard."

It was some time before the storm abated, and then only gradually; at length the wind, which before had swept along with such reckless fury, sighed itself, like a fretful and worn-out child, to rest. The "live thunder leaping from peak to peak" had ceased to roar, and was only heard reverberating amongst the hills, awakening their distant echoes. The lightning no longer darting, with a scorpion tongue, through the wide air, gently played, as if in sport, over the loftiest pinnacles of Bryndu, or along the enormous ridge of Y Fan Dringarth, and the torrent-rain subsided into a gentle

refreshing shower. The tempest had continued so long, that it was near midnight ere I retired to rest. I threw open the casement of my window to enjoy, for a moment, the calm clear scene that had succeeded to the tumultuous storm. The sky displayed its wide azure field, upon which the clouds lay in white fleecy folds, "like a flock at rest," or if they gently moved, and obscured for a while the moon's quiet saintly face, it was only to part again before her renewed splendours,

"As though a silv'ry veil were rent
From the jewelled brow of a queen."

The stars, those "eyes of heaven," shone with a brightness and intensity, only to be seen in these altitudes. Their restless fires seemed to glow with heavenly intelligence and harmony, such as when they rejoiced together in the prime of the world; or as they are painted by Lorenzo to his "little shrew," the "pretty Jessica,"—

"There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins."

A deep tranquillity,—a gentle, settled, and holy stillness,—rested on all nature, and the pale, gleaming night looked like "a mellowed day." I closed my window deeply touched with the marvellous beauty and unsearchable mystery of the scene.

I now took my leave of Pont Neath Vaughan, a little village which has some claim to consideration from its antiquity, but more from its delightful situation, being seated at the head of the interesting Vale of Neath, and surrounded, for many miles, by high, bleak, and

romantic elevations. I deem it right, however, before my departure, to correct many mis-statements which have been made respecting the rivers and mountain-torrents in this district. Having taken many a weary step, and scaled many a lofty ridge, to trace the sources of the streams which form the great Neath river, I can assure the gentle reader that he may receive my record with implicit faith. Looking north from the Angel Inn, the most westerly of these streams is the *Parthen*, which rises near Capel-Coelbren, and, after dividing the counties of Glamorgan and Brecon for four miles, falls into the *Neath-fychan*, about a mile above Pont Neath Vaughan; the latter stream rises due north, at a distance of eight or ten miles among the hills. The *Melte* has also a northerly bearing; it is formed by the confluence of two rivulets a mile above Ystradfelte, called *Llia* and *Dringarth*, and is afterwards augmented, within three miles of Pont Neath Vaughan, by the rapid torrent of the *Hepste*, rising nearly ten miles beyond, in one of the cwms near the summit of the Brecknockshire Beacon. In a meadow close to the Angel Inn, the two rivers, *Melte* and *Neath-fychan*, unite their waters, and then begins the Neath river. There are, also, half a dozen minor streams in this vicinity, one of the most remarkable of which is the *Sychrhid*, near Craig-y-Dinas.

An early breakfast prepared me to sustain the fatigue, and to accomplish the object, of another day's inspection of the enchanting scenery so profusely spread around this neighbourhood. "The breezy call of incense-breathing morn" seemed to invite me forth to partake of the delights which Nature had prepared

amidst her mountains and woodlands. The early birds were on the wing, making the air vocal with their melody; and the shallow stream of the Neath-fychan rippled garrulously over its rocky bed.

On departing from Pont Neath Vaughan, I took the same route as on the day before, and ascended, with renewed spirits and elastic step, the southern path that leads over Craig-y-Dinas. I stayed not to enjoy again the scenes of the past evening, but hastened forward to accumulate the treasures which almost every step afforded. It would have been impossible to have passed over the high ground of Cilhep Stefach, immediately beyond the broad rock I had just traversed, without pausing to cast "one longing, lingering look" over the enchanting Vale of Neath. Pursuing my path over this elevated tract, I now first caught sight of that fine river, the Hepste, one of the objects of my search, peacefully gliding through a richly-wooded dingle to the point where it joins its sister stream, the Melte.

I traced a zigzag path on the high ground above the stream of the Hepste, and then threading my way down the cwm amidst a forest of trees and underwood, with the noise of the cascades constantly breaking upon the ear, reached the higher fall of the river. It consists of one broad sheet, and descends a distance of forty feet into a large and deep basin below. So rapid is the torrent, that the path to the other side of the stream is under the falling sheet of water, which roars with a deafening noise as its fretted stream reaches the bottom of the fall,—then billowing in its deep channel, or making eddying circles as if to regain its wonted composure, it sends forward at last its majestic stream

with the same joyous haste and swelling importance as before.

On my path amidst the trees and rocks to the junction of the two rivers, I passed the three lower falls, which the heavy storm of the preceding evening had increased to their full force of magnificent display. Having remained a considerable time amongst these remarkable scenes, I once more turned away to the high ground, almost relieved that the deafening sound of the roaring cataracts had subsided, from the distance, into the solemn and ceaseless murmur that seems to pervade these regions.

Passing the farmhouse of Cilhepste-coed, I directed my steps again towards the Melte. There are three waterfalls on this river; the most distinguished is called Clungwyn, and is the highest upon the stream; its peculiar characteristic is in the great volume of water it throws over an abrupt projection, at the height of seventy feet. There is no approaching it from below, all access being closed by the rocky precipitous banks of the river, and it loses the richer beauties which belong to the falls of the Hepste, while it maintains a successful rivalry in the more awful and sublime features of the mountain cataract.

Advancing up the rich cwm of the Melte, I passed the farm of Hendre-bolon: pursuing my way again towards the stream, I reached another hollow, called Cwm Porth, in which is to be found that stupendous natural cavern, through the dark bottom of which the Melte runs for nearly four hundred yards, without in the slightest degree disturbing the incumbent surface of the land. The river rolls its dark tide beneath, and





THE GREAT VOLCANIC Eruption, 1815.

the harvest-field waves above, as it has done for generations past.

The cavern of Cwm Porth is within two miles of Ystradfellte. The approach on the upper or northern part of the river is exceedingly picturesque; but the visitor is not aware of the stupendous natural aqueduct he has the opportunity of exploring until he reaches the river, when he feels the full force of its peculiar wildness and grandeur. On either side of the opening, numbers of forest and other trees, of great diversity of form and variety of foliage, grow spontaneously; even in the fissures of the bold rocks, high above the head of the spectator, large trees are seen expanding towards the sky. At the entrance, the cavern is about forty feet wide and twenty high. There is sufficient light, on a fine day, for examining about fifty yards of this natural tunnel, when it gradually fades away into impenetrable gloom, and nothing but the blaze of a flambeau will enable the visitor to complete the inspection of this extraordinary place.

CHAPTER XVII.

TRECASTLE—BRECON—CRICKHOWEL—LLANTONY.

And oft the craggy cliff he loved to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost,
What dreadful pleasure ! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
And view the enormous waste of vapour tossed
In billows, lengthening to the horizon round,
Now scooped in gulfs, with mountains now embossed !
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound !

BEATTIE.

THE inhabitant of one of the quiet rural districts of "merry England," whose eye has been accustomed to rest only upon the green slopes and flower-enamelled meadows of his native land, teeming with happy life and rich in verdant beauty, can form no adequate idea of the scene which is presented in a region of sterile rocks, interchanged only here and there by solitary cwms or hollows, where a scanty vegetation struggles for existence, and over which the foot of the enterprising traveller rarely treads.

The county of Brecknock, like that of its neighbour Glamorgan, presents, in many parts, the same wild features of untamed nature that it did when the ancient lords of Cambria left it to the undisputed possession of

its aboriginal tenants, the foxes,* while they chose their more genial dwelling-places in the fertile vales lying east of the Severn.

The lofty ridge of the Epynt Mountains stretches itself in a north-easterly direction, from the confines of Carmarthenshire, nearly up to the little town of Builth, dividing the county of Brecknock into two unequal parts. The southern portion of the county sustains a chain of enormous rocky elevations, commencing also in the neighbouring county of Carmarthen, and continuing, in successive ridges, till it terminates in the east near the Usk, a little below the town of Crickhowel. Between these chains, to the westward, and appearing as if to make up the circle of rocks, rises abruptly the Black Mountain, near to the small hamlet of Talgarth.

The old road, as it is called, from Ystradfellte to Brecknock, traverses the mountain district, and as it comprehended many of the wild features of the county, I chose it for my track as far as my wanderings might render it available. About two miles from the village, I came to another fall of the Melte, which, although extremely picturesque, from the angular direction in which the river is projected, is unaccompanied either by the luxuriant vegetation, or the romantic character, which give so much beauty and interest to the others. Beyond this fall the scene became indescribably dreary. Immediately before and around me arose hill after hill, in weary succession, whose dull monotonous brown turf afforded but a bare existence to the meagre flocks that sought their pasture. On the verge of my path towered

* The primitive name of Brecknockshire was Garth Madrin, the Foxhold.

the bald rocky summits of Y Fan-llia and Y Fan-nedd, like guardian giants of the district over which I was travelling. That portion of the great *Strata Montana*, known by the name of Sarn Helen, traverses for a considerable length of way the same elevated direction; but the track of the haughty Roman diverges off westerly, near to a great stone, called Maenllia, that is conspicuously placed on this spot, and gradually descends on the south side of the pleasant vale of Senni, towards the point where it joins the *Julia Strata*, on its road to the great station of Gaer. My path bent in an easterly direction, and brought me to the head of the precipitous dingle of Cwm-du, through which it passes, skirted on the right by the lofty mountain-ridge of Y Fan-frynach, nearly up to the town of Brecknock. Fatigued by the difficult road I had been for some time traversing, and wearied with the stern aspect of those eternal rocks, I determined to sojourn here awhile, and seek the genial relief of a day's placid retreat to the rich valley of the Usk.

I rose early; for to me a morning in waning autumn yields the greatest enjoyment, which the seasons, in their ceaseless revolution, afford. There is a peculiar freshness in the early air, which animates the spirits, and raises up pleasant images in the mind—

"It fans the feverish brow,
And cheerily re-illumes the lambent flame of life."

There is a rich composure in the manifold colours of the forest leaves, and a mellow harmony, that naturally belong to the time of the year, all of which throw their influence over the feelings. Besides this, in an autumn

day are those frequent changes, which possess an ineffable charm for the wayward mind. The copious dews of the prime are sometimes dispersed by the rising sun, darting his intermittent ray through the opening lids of the morning clouds, like the bright eye of some heavenly being, and pouring a flood of light from his molten fountain, with an intensity and a fierceness which midsummer fails to bring. Then there is the uncertain wind, which sweeps in sudden and capricious gusts, scattering the bright leaves, and whirling them in eddies all around; there is the drizzling shower, pattering monotonously, but not unmusically, amongst the forest trees; and then, not unfrequently, there is the wild tempest to close up the evening.

The river Usk rises in the mountain-range called the Carmarthenshire Fan, which divides the counties at their westerly point, near Trecastle. From this place it rolls its tide in an easterly course towards Brecknock and Crickhowel, where it enters the county of Monmouth, and, passing by the towns of Abergavenny, Usk, Caerleon, and Newport, empties itself through its estuary into the Severn. The lower vale is the most luxuriant and romantic; but the passage of the river from Trecastle to the town in which I was sojourning, or along the Upper Vale, as it is called, has its own peculiar beauties. The road from Trecastle runs on the right of the river, sometimes rising in the form of a terrace above it, and again tracing its undulating line by the side of its silvery stream, sharing in all the beauties of its devious course. The Cray and the Isker pour their waters into its channel before it reaches Brecknock. The pleasant villages of Llanspyddid and

Aberisker may be seen from its banks ; and the Roman encampment on a rising ground, near the confluence of the Isker and the Usk, will detain and delight the antiquarian in his researches. This beautiful river derives much of its captivating character from the magnificent timber that decorates its shelving banks, and from the occasional glades and openings they afford, through which the clear bright stream is seen meandering and flowing in its course. The eye of the Wanderer, which had gazed with inexpressible delight upon these enchanting scenes, was in an especial manner refreshed when he came, unexpectedly, within sight of the romantic bridge of Pont Pwl Gwyn, stretching its single chord across the channel of the river. Fir-trees of extraordinary growth, such as are rarely seen but in this district, reared high their green peaks in the foreground, and groves of majestic oaks mingled their varied autumnal hues in one rich and harmonious combination, from the summits of the verging banks to the water's edge. The looming line of distant hills, irradiated with the last rays of the setting sun, formed the back-ground of this exquisite picture, while the gentle Usk glided in soft unruffled beauty through the tranquil scene.

Brecknock, or to recall its ancient and more classical name of Aberhonddu, derived from the circumstance of its standing at the point where the Honddu unites its waters with the Usk, is one of the pleasantest towns in the Principality. Old Churchyard describes it, in his day, as

“Well-built without, yea trim and fayre within,
With sweet prospect, that shall your favour win.”

It possesses architectural remains which connect it with





the most important events of past ages, and is surrounded by natural objects of the most sublime and beautiful character. It was anciently encircled by a wall, which, in Speed's time, was perfect, surmounted by ten towers, at nearly equal distances, and had five gates of entrance. The castle, which was one of the earliest structures of this description in Wales, once occupied the brow of an abrupt hill, on a point of land washed on the south and east by the waters of the Honddu. It was built by the Norman, Bernard de Newmarch, after his signal defeat of the Welsh in this district, with a magnificence and strength calculated to overawe his conquered subjects. It arose in the latter part of the eleventh century, and has passed through several powerful families, who successively improved and enlarged it, till it was besieged, and nearly destroyed, in the Civil Wars between Charles and his Parliament. Its proud bearing on the banks of the subject waters of the Honddu and Usk, with the chivalric passages and baronial splendour which mark its eventful history, are all, however, reduced to a few miserable ruins; but the rivers still glide on as heretofore—with the same eagerness and impetuosity as they did when the Norman trod upon their banks. Old Giraldus tells a singular story in relation to the founder of the castle, which I shall give in the chronicler's words:—"This Bernarde" (says he) "had a faire wife, called Nesta, whiche was greatly in love with a gentleman whiche haunted her chamber, whiche thinge, as Bernarde's son, Mabel, espied, he lay in awayte for him, and beate him; the mother (to make argument of a woman's malice) mad haste to Kinge Henry I., and in

his presence avowed upon her consiens that he was born from unlawfull conversation, whereupon the kinge gave her daughter, Sybil, which remayned (by her own confession legitimate), and the honor of Breknoc, to Miles Fitzwalter, his constable, whiche was after Earle of Hereford." Of this confession, Burton says :—"That if true, it declared her dishonesty ; if false, her perjury ; but whether true or false, her matchless impudence." There is a circumstance of too much historical importance in relation to this lady to be passed over in silence. When Macbeth, the tyrant of Scotland, murdered Banquo, his son Fleance fled for protection to the court of Gryffydd ap Llewelyn, the grandfather of Nest, of whom he became enamoured. An illicit connection followed, and a son, afterwards named Walter, was the consequence. The indignant Gryffydd commanded Fleance to be put to death for this breach of hospitality and honour, but his son was treated with kindness, and educated in the martial exercises of the age. Upon some reproach being cast upon his birth by one of his companions, Walter killed his antagonist and fled into Scotland. Here he distinguished himself in the public service, and became lord steward of the realm, and the lineal ancestor of the royal house of Stuart.

The side of the castle was a parallelogram, with a massy inward wall and strong angular watch-towers. The entrance was on the western and eastern sides, with a deep moat surrounding the whole, over which were thrown bridges of communication. The principal part now remaining is that which once formed the keep, on an artificial mound to the north-east, designated Ely

Tower, from its having been the place of imprisonment to Moreton, bishop of Ely. To this gloomy tower did the crafty Buckingham repair, when disappointed of the ambitious hopes which the crooked-back tyrant had led him to indulge, to hold a secret conference with the imprisoned bishop; and here did these wily politicians concert the plan which, in its progress, led the warrior to the scaffold, and the churchman to the highest honours of the hierarchy. It may be useful for the reader to know, that these ruins of the castle now ornament the lawn of the inn, which has taken its name from this circumstance, and I would furthermore recommend him, from my own experience, to these excellent quarters during his stay at Brecon.

It is curious to contemplate that union of devout feeling with natural ferocity and social injustice, which distinguished this age of military adventure and conquest. There is, indeed, no truth-telling diary placed upon record,—no secret confession that has escaped from under the seal,—which discloses those secret operations of the mind that led to this singular connection, except it were as the historian has written, “to make atonement for vice and irregularity;” but the fact is demonstrated by the numerous religious houses which the Norman conquerors of this country everywhere erected. The lord of Brecknock, in accordance with the character of the times, when he had subjugated the inhabitants of this district, reared at once the fortress, which has just been described, to consolidate his conquest, and a Benedictine priory, which he dedicated to the apostle St. John, and whose holy brotherhood ministered spiritual instruction and con-

solation in the chapel built within the fortress. The priory, with its church bearing the same apostolical designation, occupied a situation near to the castle, on the western bank of the Honddu. The former has almost entirely disappeared, save an embattled wall, and a portion of the old building now used for stables and out-offices, while a comparatively modern mansion bears its title and occupies its site.* The inner area of the priory grounds is laid with a green carpet of nature's own weaving, and the ancient walls of the church and priory are matted over with a level covering of the most verdant ivy. The walk by the sloping side of the brawling Honddu bears a forest of sycamores and walnuts of great luxuriance and age, and was once used as the ambulatory of the good old monks. The aged domestic of the place shook his head when I asked him the date of their planting, and resorting to the usual mode of computation with all grey-beards, replied, "Why, Sir, I am seventy years old come next Candlemas, and I remember they were fine trees when I was a boy." The church has been preserved with great care, and displays the peculiar features of its origin and history through so many generations; the repairs and embellishments, which have been so frequently supplied, have been made with much taste, and correspond as nearly as possible with the original structure. It is ornamented with some ancient and modern

* "In this house, Charles I., after the battle of Naseby, dined with Sir Hubert Price, and slept on the 5th August, 1645. From hence he despatched a letter to Prince Charles, then in Cornwall, in which he seems clearly to foresee his fate, and advises his son to quit the kingdom, and flee to France."—*Jones's Brecknockshire*.

monuments of exquisite design and execution, and contains what are called the Vicar's and the Marquis of Camden's Chapels. The whole pavement of the transept is covered with "long flat stones," the mortuary memorials of those who have lived and died, and the extent of which is divided by what are termed the Battle Chapel,—the Chapel of the Men of Battle,—and the Capel Cochaiaid, or chapel of the red-haired men, as the Normans were called.

St. John's, or the Priory Church, is built in the form of a cross, from the centre of which rises an embattled tower. The churchyard is an object of great interest. Instead of sweet-scented flowers, the green turf of the graves is adorned with sprigs of the laurel and box, which the hand of affection has placed there, according to the custom of this county.* Venerable yew-trees, of prodigious growth and age, claim almost a coexistent antiquity with the consecrated building, with some splendid specimens of the sycamore, and throw an air of deep solemnity over the scene.

"All that have died, the Earth's whole race repose
Where Death collects his treasures, heap on heap ;
O'er each one's busy day the night shades close ;
Its actors, sufferers, schools, kings, armies—sleep."

The tongue of land, near which the priory stands, has furnished to the inhabitants of Brecon one of the most beautiful public promenades in the empire. The walks are traced in undulating lines through the luxuriant groves that cover its surface, carrying their umbrageous shade down to the brink of the river, while the Honddu

* The unfortunate Dr. Dodd, who was attached to this prebendary, has celebrated this interesting usage by a beautiful little poem.

continues to sweep round this miniature headland, rolling its ceaseless stream as restless and turbulent as in ages that are gone for ever.

There is also the church of Saint Mary, which stands in the centre of the town. It, however, contains but few monuments of interest, and is principally admired for its ancient steeple, and the eight musical bells it contains, cast by Mr. Rudhall, of Gloucester.

Besides the Benedictine priory, there was another building of the same character, near the east end of the town, of the order of St. Dominic, which is said to have been erected by the same renowned Norman. This might have been the case but for one chronological fact, that the saint did not live till after the warrior was dead. This institution was transformed into a seat of learning by Henry VIII., at the general confiscation of religious houses, which took place in his reign, with the title of the "College of Christ Church, Brecknock," and in the church anciently belonging to this monastery, dedicated to St. Nicholas, were buried the three bishops, Mainwaring, Lucy, and Bull. This relic is in a most dilapidated state, pervious to the rain, which at the time I visited it was dripping through the roof, and falling upon the black and mouldy floor in melancholy and measured iteration. The old sanctuary has, however, some monuments besides those of the good bishops, including two recumbent figures in alabaster, and a full-length statue of Colonel Walker, once the recorder of the town.

Nothing could appear more painfully desolate than this deserted edifice, in which, the old clerk informed me, there had not been divine service performed for

more than three years, except an annual charity sermon, to which appertained a bequest sufficient to pay the lecturer for his discourse, and a dole of bread for the poor. The empty stalls stand in a rank round the damp and dingy walls, marked with the names of the parishes which they represent, and the offices of dean, precentor, and treasurer. The aged official, at my elbow, said some very hard things about the appropriation of the funds of this establishment; but the most melancholy circumstance he had to tell, was that his own occupation was gone, and that the chapter was in debt to him thirty or forty pounds in the way of salary, which seemed to his foreboding mind to be in imminent jeopardy. The learned author of the History of Brecknockshire has bestowed upon the ecclesiastical authorities of his time a just rebuke for their neglect of the sacred edifices in this county; and surely some portion of this censure may be properly applied to the appointed conservators of this venerable building. It must be confessed, indeed, that the traveller, especially the antiquarian traveller, is disposed to look with mournful interest upon the ruins of ancient buildings, either on account of their architectural grandeur and beauty, or their association with great names, and the important and picturesque passages of history. There is, as a very pleasant writer has said, "an exquisite provision of Nature, in this tendency of the human mind to prefer by-gone times to the present, because it leads us to respect the past, like the memory of the dead, and retain of it only what is beautiful and good."* But

* "Letters from the Shores of the Baltic," one of the most lively and sensible among the many books of travels that are published.

the traveller should not forget, while he expends his regrets upon a fallen fabric, like this of Christ Church, to inquire whether the real purpose of its erection has not been supplied by more suitable buildings, and by a process of religious instruction better adapted to the wants of the community with which it is connected. I felt too much interest in the fate of the old edifice, not to seek for information from the best authorities on this point, and I have a lively satisfaction in giving the result of my inquiry in the words of my intelligent correspondent.*

The old weather-beaten parochial church of St. David

* "The real cause why the church has not yet been repaired is, that at present, it is not wanted for the accommodation of any part of the population of Brecon, which is sufficiently provided for elsewhere, so that if restored at this moment, it would answer no purpose but that of gratifying the eye and the feelings of those who take an interest in the fabric. This is so clear, that the under-secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (into whose hands the funds of the college are passing for the augmentation of small livings) having, some months back, examined the building, and made himself acquainted with the state of the case, expressed his opinion that it would be better to let it go to decay, and that, at all events, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners would not feel themselves justified in applying any of the funds derived from the college to its restoration. Nevertheless, a hope is entertained that, if the college school (which has been in a declining state since the establishment of St. David's College, at Lampeter) can be revived and enlarged, as has been contemplated, it may, at the same time, be found practicable and expedient to repair the church for the use of the school. Of the persons connected with this establishment, it is but just to add, that they are some of the most hard-working clergymen in the Church of England; persons who are engaged more laboriously, as well as more usefully, than they would be if they were every day performing a service in the college church to empty walls."





is not far from the mouldering remnant of the church of Christ's College. It was formerly situated in a field, and from that circumstance called St. David's in the Field. It possesses little to engage the visitor, except its age and connection with ancient days. In this parish, nearly at the foot of the Beacons, lived the learned Dr. John David Rhys, the author of the *Cymraecæ Linguae Institutiones*, who pays a high compliment to the inhabitants of Brecknockshire in his preface to that work. "I believe from my soul," he says, "that there is no part of the Principality wherein the nobility, gentry, and commonalty are more worthy, whose mansions are more stately, where the dainties and delicacies of the table are more sumptuous, and the people of all ranks more distinguished for the neatness of their apparel, their kindness, or their hospitality, than the inhabitants of the county of Brecknock."

The town of Brecon contains some excellent public buildings, amongst which may be reckoned the Market Hall, built by Mr. Griffiths, of this place, from a design by Mr. Wyatt, of London, at a cost of about 5,000*l.*; and a County Hall, erected of pure Bath stone, under the direction of the same talented architect, by Mr. Hancorn, of Brecon. This latter is a Grecian building, and forms a beautiful object to greet the traveller's sight as he enters the town by way of Crickhowel. It stands upon an area, along the side of which extends a public promenade, called the Captain's Walk, pleasantly shaded by poplars and sycamores, with the Usk flowing merrily at its base. The total cost of this building is

about 7,000*l.*, and does great credit to the artist and the county.

The neighbourhood of Brecon possesses that indefinable charm which history and romance throw around the wild scenes of Nature. On the north and west lie the scattered fragments of British and Roman camps and intrenchments, and the battle-field in which Welsh independence expired; on the south and east rise, in gigantic splendour, the forms of those magnificent mountains which have frowned alike on the passing generations of their British, Roman, and Norman possessors. Mount Denny, whose divaricated peaks are known by the modern name of the Brecknockshire Beacons, stretches itself in a southerly direction from Brecknock, through a lengthened succession of undulating ridges, thrown into a variety of fantastic shapes, over which the clouds sweep in their racking career, or hang in graceful floating drapery of the most exquisite tissue. The more elevated and northern peaks are called Cader Arthur, or the Chair of Arthur. There is both a romantic and historical association with these enormous piles of rocks, as the renowned hero whose name they bear may be contemplated through the fables of poetry or the facts of history. In the phraseology of the bards, a public assembly of their body was always termed the "Chair of Song." These minstrel gatherings were invariably made in the open air, on some elevated place, or, in their figurative language, "under the eye of the sun;" and as the Knight of the Round Table, during his reign, held a grand national meeting of the bards, the historian has assigned this majestic hill as the spot to which they

repaired from all parts of the Principality, and where the institutes of their order were framed.*

While the morning dew yet rested upon the green meadows, I set forward upon my route to Crickhowel. The road—and a cheerful one it is—runs along an elevated ridge that bisects the valley, and passes through the little places of Llanhamlach, Seethrog, and Llan-saintfread, and ascends the mountain-pass of Bwlch. On the right of the traveller flows the lively Usk, with the musical waters of the Cynrig, the Tarrell, and the

* It may be to the advantage of the tourist to inform him in this place, that one of the best views of the Beacons is obtained from the lawn at the western end of the Castle Inn. Although apparently only about two miles distant, I found the ascent occupied several hours of persevering exertion. Taking the Merthyr road as far as Llyn y celyn, I branched off to the left, passing through the opening between the hills, called Cwm-llwch, to the summit of the highest eminence. The scene was indescribably grand: westerly, lay Llyn cwm-llwch, a small lake below the Beacons, at a height probably of 2,500 feet above the sea; beyond it the farm of Ty-mawr, the highest on the mountains; below which is the road from Merthyr to Brecon, and in the extreme distance, Moel fendy and the Carmarthenshire hills. To the north were traced, as in a map, the divisions of land below, dotted here and there with whitewashed houses; beyond, the town of Brecon and the river Usk; and bounding the distant horizon, the hills near Builth. On the east, the lake of Llynfaddu and the Cradle Mountains. Southerly, a stupendous range of mountains, one rising beyond the other as far as Merthyr Tydvil, and more westerly to Pont Neath Vaughan. The vapours that sometimes invest the Beacons are so dense, that the traveller is in danger of falling over its precipitous side. The officers of a regiment, lying at Brecon, once made the ascent; but the night coming on, the thick mist covered the summit like a shroud, and they were obliged to remain in that uncomfortable situation till the following morning afforded them the means of a safe descent. Dr. Johnson says: "He that mounts precipices, wonders how he came there, and doubts how he shall return. His walk is an adventure, and his departure an escape."

Mahascin, meandering through the vale to swell its broad channel; and the villages of Cantreff, Llanfrynach, and Llanfigan lying near its banks, shut in by the enormous range of the Brecknockshire Beacons. All this is classic ground. Here it was that the Roman general had his *campus æstivus*, or summer residence, with those appliances of luxury which that refined people ever associated with their dwelling-places. Here, too, was the battle-field and Druidical sepulchres of noble Britons, who struggled and fell in defence of their patrimonial and national rights. Here, also, the birthplace of learned men, renowned in science, and deeply versed in the lore of philosophy and divinity.

Not far from the Bwlch pass the river makes a horse-shoe bend, near the point of which is the hamlet of Llandetty, and within its curve may be distinctly seen the mansion and grounds of Buckland. On the extreme left stretch the bleak summits of the Black Mountains, and underneath them lies Brecknock Mere, called severally Llyn-savaddan Lake, or Llangorse Pool, with the little hamlets of Llangasty tâl y llyn, Llangorse, and Cathedine. Not far from the first of these places, in the parish of Llanhamlach, is a farm called Mannest, and near it a hillock, upon which is the cromlech known under the name of Saint Illtid's Hermitage.* The elevated region of Bwlch places all these

* Of this holy man, the father of learning in South Wales, and whose fame lives in Brecknockshire, it is becoming just to give a slight sketch. St. Illtid came from Armorica to Britain with St. Germanus, to preach down the Pelagian heresy, and founded a seminary at Llantwit, in Glamorganshire, which flourished for several centuries, and produced many learned and pious fathers of the British Church. "When this object was accomplished, and he saw his school rising in

in beautiful perspective before the traveller's eye; and such is the extent of the prospect, that he may gaze upon it for hours with ever fresh delight. The pass has been cut through the heart of the Bwlch mountain, on which a comfortable inn has been built in opposition to the ancient hostelry, and now the Old and the New Star shine in rivalry to each other for the solace of the weary traveller. From this place the road rapidly descends to Crickhowel, with the solitary vestige of Tretower Castle close to the stream of the Rhiangoll on the left, which ought to detain for awhile the pilgrim's foot, were it only to recall the scenes of its past history, and to regale his eye with the wild flowers which now flourish in unmolested seclusion, where nobles and knights had used to meet together in council, or from which they hurried forth to war.* Farther on, Glanusk, the mansion of Mr. Bailey, who is said to be the wealthiest iron-master in Great Britain, rises beautifully on the right bank of the river, with its bridge in architectural keeping with the style of the building; and on the other side, in a more elevated situation, Penngarth, the

fame, and his disciples qualified to protect and support the institution, he did not confine his talents or his labours to a college or a county, but commiserating the state of intellectual darkness with which the Principality was then overspread, he conceived it his duty to communicate the light and truths of the Gospel, and the precepts of wisdom, to the inhabitants of Breconshire, where undoubtedly he resided." Many tales are told of St. Illtud, one of which is, that he had an animal half a horse and half a stag, that used to bring his provisions from market.

* The defence of this castle, at the time of Glyndwr's insurrection, was intrusted to Sir James Berkley. A branch of the great Roman road, called the Strata Julia, passed through the village of Tretower, to the station of Gaer, in Cwmdu.

residence of his son; and Gwernvale, the seat of Mr. Gwynne.* The traveller now enters the little town of Crickhowel by the old embattled gateway, which once formed part of the castellated mansion of the first Herberts.

There are few of the fair prospects of earth that can equal the valley of the Usk. It does not consist, like many others, of a strip of fertile land, formally guarded by elevated ridges, and jealously confined within limits, over which the eye can sweep at one view; but it throws itself out into a series of verdant circles, ascending the hill-sides, and dipping down to the brink of the flowing river. The gigantic barriers in the extreme distance consist of the Brecknockshire Beacons on one side, and the dark range of the Black Mountains on the other. From the champaign lying within these, spring mountain after mountain of inferior elevation, with tiny vales running from their bases, and filling the intervening space with fallowed fields and green meadows, or else, it may be, embracing narrow friths, through which run the whimpering rivulets that feed the noble stream, shadowed by foliage, and dressed in all the coloured pigments of the season. The restless eye of the traveller ranges along the outline of the landscape which lies within his vision, and descending to the green bottom, he fancies that the Usk has disclosed all the beauties that lie upon its banks; but as his step advances, he throws his gaze upon another and another still fairer prospect, endlessly diversified by the sinuous outlines of the mountains, which again and

* The celebrated Dr. Croxall, translator of "*Æsop's Fables*," and author of various other works, formerly resided in this mansion.

again rise to direct his sight along their swelling breasts, and deep recesses. This is truly the "Valley of Sweet Waters," where early Spring, with her cuckoo voice, calls up young life from the cradle of the year; where Summer revels, and "the great sun,"

"Robed in flames and amber light,"

makes his regal procession along a sky of pure cobalt, shedding his brightest beams on mountain-peak and hoary hill, and descending, like an angel visitor, to cheer up every sheltered nook; where Autumn pours from her horn the rich treasures she has gathered from the rolling seasons, and paints the woods with the glowing hues of the skies. The gentle rains descend on this favoured valley, from the "high chambers" of the cloudy firmament, and the bride of Zephyrus covers the teeming land with a spangled garment of many colours. The gladsome Usk, like a traveller bent on a long pilgrimage, hurries forward, making incessant music, and adding its hoarse bass notes to the clear trebles of the woods. A liquid harmony floats through the air, and the late and early tints mingle in grateful composure over the beautiful complexion of Nature. River, and field, and forest, are full of rejoicing life. Sunbeams, and "frolic winds," and shadows of the passing clouds, chase each other over the flowery landscape. Heaven smiles on Earth, and Earth gives back her incense and her melody. Nor is this all. It is not Nature dwelling alone amidst her secret haunts, or walking pensively through her sweet solitudes; but it is man, immortal man, dwelling with Nature—congregated into villages occupying the most beautiful spots

of the valley, with homesteads fraught with domestic affections, and sanctuaries figuring out to the thoughtful mind another and a better country,—or households nestling round the private hearth in lovely vale or bosky dingle,—or whitewashed cottages on mountain-side, or even mountain-top. It is beautiful Nature, like a young mother, with her sleeping infant on her lap, or with her gathered families of earth, laughing and playing at her feet. Such is the valley of the Usk, of which a native poet of the seventeenth century has thus sung :—

“May thy gentle swaines like flowers
Sweetly spend their youthfull hours,
And thy beauteous nymphs like doves
Be kind and faithful to their loves.
Garlands, and songs, and roundelays,
Mild dewie nights and sunshine dayes,
The turtle's voice, joy without fear,
Dwell on thy bosom all the year—
The fastour winds from far shall bringe
The gathered odours of the springe,
And loaden with the rich arrear,
Spend them in spicie whispers here.”

Crickhowel, which Leland calls “a preati tounlet, standing in the valley upon Wyske,” is built on the shelving side of a gentle hill. It is of considerable antiquity, and is supposed to have been founded by Howel Dda, in the tenth century. There are but few fragments of its ancient castle remaining, save one dismantled tower, now overgrown with ivy, and the ruins of a gateway, both of them performing servile offices very much at variance with their former dignity. The keep, or citadel, once occupied a lofty artificial mound,

whose slopes are now covered with trees of considerable growth, and so elevated, that the eye commands from it a range of the most interesting objects in this picturesque district. Traces of broken walls may be seen ; and the grass-green field that lies at the gazer's foot constituted, most probably, the inner and outer vallums of the old fortress. This castle was fortified by Sir John Pauncefote, under a commission from Henry IV., to resist the forces of Owen Glyndwr, by whom, according to the obscure records that remain, it was eventually taken and demolished. Sir Rhys ap Thomas, when he was marching to Shrewsbury, to meet Henry the Seventh, passed through Crickhowel, and planted the standard of that monarch on the top of a street, which has been called from that circumstance, Standard Street.

The church, which is cruciform in its style, and dedicated to St. Edmund the king and martyr,* by which name the parish was anciently called, is distinguished by having the only spire in the county of Brecknock. It contains two old monuments to the Pauncefote family ; a more modern one in alabaster of Sir John Herbert, knight, and Joan, his wife ; an exquisitely sculptured tablet to the Rev. H. Vaughan, late vicar of the parish, of whom the good people of Crickhowel speak in terms of great affection ; and a

* This royal saint, as histories inform us, was massacred by the Danish general Hinguar, about the year 871. The story of his death, as related by a monkish writer, quoted by Camden, marks the barbarity of the times in which he lived : "He was bound to a tree and had his body all over mangled with arrows ; to increase his pain, they did with showers of arrows make wound on wound, till the darts gave place to one another."—*Jones's History of Brecknock.*

monument in white marble to Mrs. Gwynne, of Gwernvale, presenting a beautiful figure of a female leaning upon an anchor, surmounted by a dove bearing an olive branch. An old effigy in steel cap and chain armour, and another of the warrior's lady-love, lie, in a mutilated condition, within the recesses of two arches, behind the seats of Glan-y-Rafon and Dan-y-Castle, as if in these modern days they were to be cast like worthless things away, though they are considered to represent the ancient founders, or re-founders, of the church. The churchyard is an interesting spot, and has some fine specimens of the willow and poplar tribes.

The old gateway before mentioned gives its name of Porth mawr to a modern mansion, the residence of Mr. Ormerod, and is worth looking through for the beautiful perspective it affords of the surrounding scenery, including Glanusk and Penmiarth, the Bwlch hills, the spreading vale, and the winding river.

The village of Llangattock lies at an easy distance on the opposite side of the Usk, and was too tempting an object to be left unvisited by the Wanderer. The church is an ancient structure, dedicated to St. Cadog, who lived about the middle of the fifth century; but it has been frequently repaired, and is in some degree modernized. The old porch is the most venerable part of it, and contains the original font for holy water, belonging to our fathers of the "ancient faith." The walls sustain many monuments, but none particularly interesting for their design or execution. The vestry is modern, and fitted up in excellent taste, the whole of which was the munificent gift of Mr. Bailey, of Glan-

usk. The churchyard possesses an old mutilated cross, and manifold painted monuments of the dead, in which are the memorials of extraordinary longevity, that prove the salubrity of this place,—five inscriptions making up the long term of five hundred years. Two “gnarled yews of deep undated root” fling their venerable branches over this place of sepulture, and on the outside of the wall is the most magnificent walnut, for age and size, and breadth of limb, that is, perhaps, to be found in the kingdom. In the limestone rock above the village, is a large cavern, called Eglwys Faen, or the Rock Church; and in this parish is the Carno Mountain, where a severe battle was fought between Roderick Molwynog, prince of North Wales, and Ethelbald, king of Mercia, in the eighth century; two carnau still remain to mark the spot.

Every one who travels to this corner of the county of Brecknock, at least every one that has an eye and a soul for the marvellous beauties with which the God of Nature has adorned this earth, stays his wandering foot upon the bridge that is thrown across the Usk between Crickhowel and Llangattock, to contemplate the scenery which discloses itself on either side. This pontile structure is built of hard granite, and consists of thirteen arches, some of which are covered in part with ivy. From the bend of the river the upper reach extends to a short distance, and, but for the lively current, would have the appearance of an inland lake, fringed by a wood of bowing branches that dip themselves in the stream. Beyond is a revelation of the open face of nature, with all its extraordinary and beautiful features, comprehending the magnificent out-

line of the Black Mountains marked on the far-off horizon to the right; the Bwlch range traversing the distant plain; the green hill that shuts in Crickhowel vale; the vale itself in all its colours and boundaries, with the merry river singing its ceaseless song to the pleasant homesteads that rise upon its enamelled banks. Below the bridge, the river descends the rapids with a thundering torrent, as if in fellowship with the majesty of the surrounding scenery. On the right are the limestone rocks of Llangattock, worn and cut into a thousand fantastic forms, and reflecting back the light in coloured hues, richly harmonizing with the mingled foliage which the eye embraces. In front is the Blorens range, lying against the sky like a huge serpent; and on the left the cone of the Sugar-loaf Mountain, and the elevated tump called the Table Hill. It is hardly possible for an intelligent mind to become conscious of the ineffable delight produced by the beauties and sublimities of nature, and the deep and mysterious thought, of which they are the source, without admitting the goodness of that Great Being, who has *super-added* this enjoyment to the mere exercise of the faculties by which they are perceived. It is through His benevolence, that every scene becomes to man the minister of improvement and gratification,—“the sun, the earth, the ocean, the mountain’s towering height, the green and golden vale stretching far out below ‘its mantle gay.’

“And every odorous plant, and brighter thing,
Born of the sunny skies, and weeping rain,
That, from the bosom of the Spring,
Starts into life and beauty once again.’





W. D. B. 1840

THE GREAT HALL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Let the traveller, then, whose heart and eye are thus instructed and delighted, thank God, and go forward.

In a deep recess of the Black Mountains, at the extremity of the county of Monmouth, and occupying the gloomy vale of Ewias, stand the shattered ruins of Llantony Abbey.* As if in unison with the barren rocks that environ it, scarcely a single tendril of green ivy has crept up the surface of its solemn walls, to hide the severe simplicity of its monastic architecture; and but here and there a stripling shrub surmounting its parapets, throws its brief shadow over the crumbling fragments of the sacred pile. The ponderous roof, and the southern and eastern walls, lie prostrate on the ground; but the pointed arches, reposing on massy piers, with a series of small circular arches, and fragments of elaborate mouldings, remain to show the corresponding magnificence of those parts of the structure which they sustained and adorned, and to prove the mixed Saxon and Norman style of this fine edifice. A portion of the great tower yet exists, and the western front still stands in solitary grandeur. The valley, which formerly afforded employment for the holy brotherhood, now yields its scanty herbage to the browsing flocks of the neighbouring farmer; and some ancient trees, at

* Giraldus has described Ewias after this manner: "A valley in Wales, not farre from Brecknock, where stode a religious house, called Llanthodoni. It is so encompassed with hilles round about, that Roger, the byshop of Salisbury, was wont to saye merely of it, that 'al the king's treasure would not suffice to make a cloyster to this house.' At this place had Gyraldus Cambrensis a house and lyvinge to it." Llantony Abbey is distant from Crickhowel about seven miles; and the varied and majestic scenes which present themselves on every hand, will furnish interesting subjects for a day's pilgrimage.

different points, mark in their green and yellow leaf, the passage of the seasons, and remain as the grey chroniclers of this dreary solitude. The brawling Honddi, swelled by the mountain torrents, rolls a fretful tide over its bed of broken rocks, and washes the southern side of the valley. Behind the ruins rise the Hatterell Hills, or, as they are sometimes called, the Mountains of Ewias, and beyond them the rocky peaks of the Black Mountains, over which the foot of man has scarcely ever trod, seeming as if to shut in this little spot from the observation of all the world.

Llantony Abbey was of the Cistercian order, and its history is to be gathered from the traditions of the early times. The legends tell that Saint David, the uncle of the renowned King Arthur, when he first beheld this solitary valley, was charmed with its entire seclusion from the world, and built a chapel on the spot.

"Here was it, stranger, that the patron saint
Of Cambria passed his age of penitence,
A solitary man; and here he made
His hermitage, the roots his food, his drink
Of Honddi's mountain stream."

One day, carried far out of his track in pursuit of the wild deer, which haunted these savage hills, a knight retainer of the earl of Hereford came unexpectedly upon the saint's retreat. The knight was struck with awe at the deep solemnity of the place. He saw the little hermitage, and near it the recess where the holy man performed his early devotions, in which was placed a small crucifix, and those emblems of mortality which the grave supplies. The mysterious air that pervaded

the scene into which he was thus suddenly introduced, and the complete silence that reigned around, broken only by the sullen murmur of the Honddi's stream, filled the mind of the knight with devout enthusiasm. He instantly forsook his chivalrous career—withdrew from all connection with the world, and, in the words of the record, "laid aside his belt, and girded himself with a rope; instead of fine linen he covered himself with hair-cloth; and instead of his soldier's robe, he loaded himself with weighty irons. The suit of armour, which before defended him from the darts of his enemies, he still wore as a garment to harden himself against the soft temptations of his old enemy Satan; that as the outward man was afflicted with austerity, the inner man might be secured for the service of God. That his zeal might not cool, he thus crucified himself, and continued his hard armour on his body until it was worn out with rust and age." The fame of the anchorite's sanctity drew one devout associate to his cell, Ernest, confessor to Maud, wife of Henry I., and inspired many wealthy and powerful nobles with great reverence for his character. Amongst the latter was Hugh de Lacey, who founded the priory of the order of St. Austin, on the site of the little hermitage. Llantonny Abbey has experienced strange vicissitudes, and has been the subject of many whimsical circumstances, in the course of its eventful history, till it was finally suppressed, with that of the same name in Gloucestershire, at the Reformation. Thus ends the legend of

"Llantonny, famed in monkish tale,
And once the pride of Ewias' vale."

A continuous history of that division of the Principality to which this work belongs, did not enter into the Wanderer's plan, but only such occasional sketches as were connected with the scenes and objects which came before his eye. He found, however, in the book of that old geographer Peter Heylyn, a summary which he deemed would not be unacceptable to his readers, and this he gives in the chronicler's own words:—

“The princes of South Wales are :—

| | | |
|-----|--------------|-----------------------|
| 877 | 1 CADELL. | 6 THEODORE THE GREAT. |
| | 2 HOELL. | 1077 7 RHESE I. |
| 907 | 3 HOELL DHA. | 1093 8 GRIFFIN I. |
| 948 | 4 OWEN. | 9 RHESE II. |
| | 5 ENEAS. | 10 GRIFFIN II. |

In whom ended the line of the princes of South Wales, after they had with great struggling maintained their liberty, the space of 300 yeares, or thereabout. The English Nobility had at severall times plucked many Townes, Lordships, and almost whole Shires, from this principate; which were all againe recovered by this last Griffin; who not long enjoying his victories, left the fruits of them to his two sonnes, Cynerick and Meredith; both whom our Henry Second tooke, and put out their eyes. Yet did the Welchmen, as well as in such a time of calamity they could, wrestle and tugge for their liberty, till the felicitie of Edward the First put an end to all the warres and troubles in these parts.”

The last chapter of a book is something like the last day of a long and friendly visit. The sojourner spends it in adjusting all claims at the house of his host—in





winding up the long family stories—and in leave-taking amongst all the acquaintances he has happened to make. The Wanderer over Cambria's land of marvels and minstrelsy has sought to fulfil the pretensions with which he took up his palmer's staff,

“And wore his sandal-shoon and scollop-shell.”

He now closes his book of legends;—and to all those surpassing beauties of mountain, hill, and valley; of open sea, and broad river, and whispering stream, associated, as they have been, with the most stirring passages of history, poetry, and romance; chequered, too, by the gay sunshine and the dark storm,—the roving joy and weary pain of a long pilgrimage—he bids a last and lingering Farewell.

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture in the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar;
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.”

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